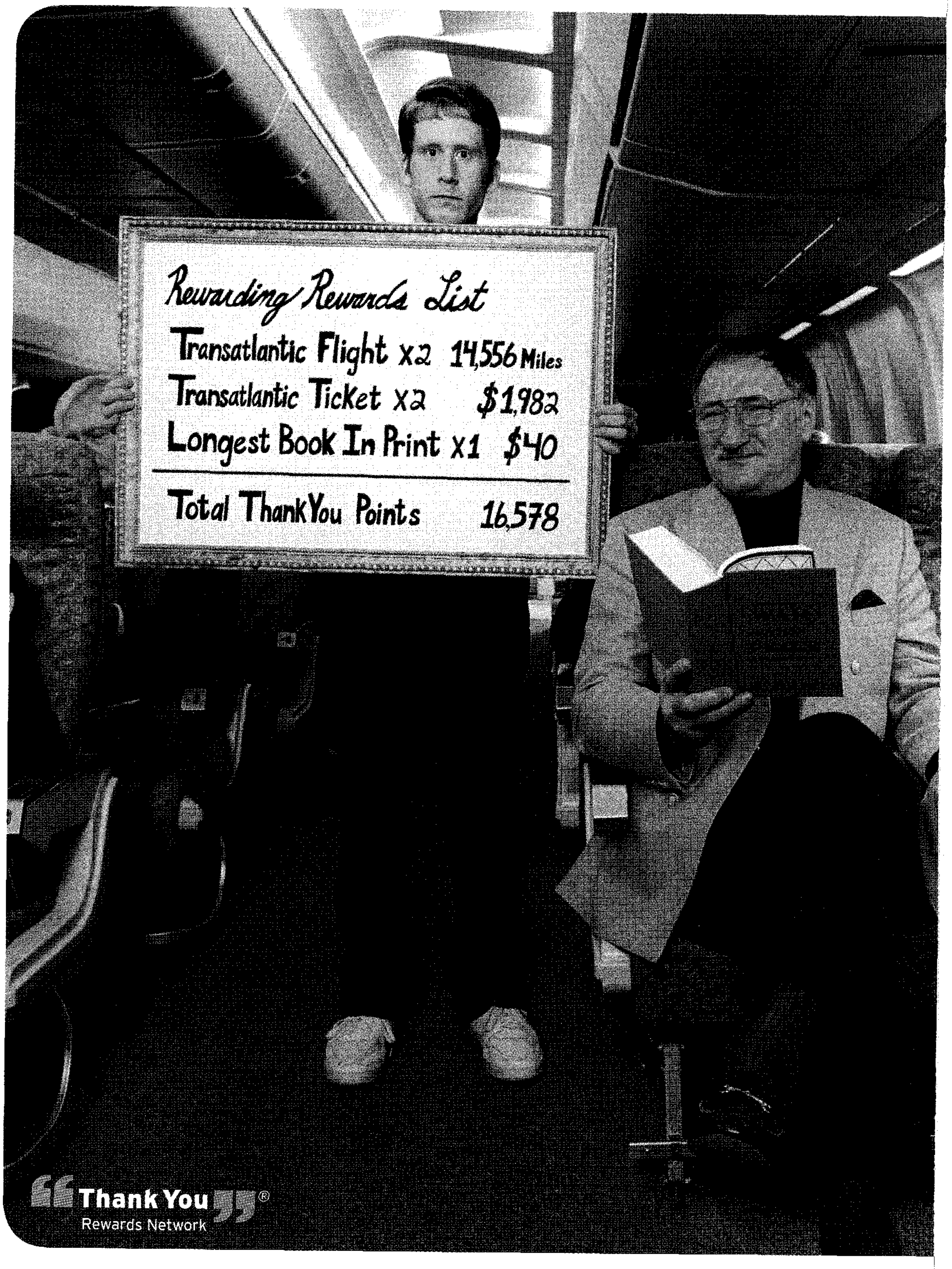
PRICE $4.50

THE NEW YORKER

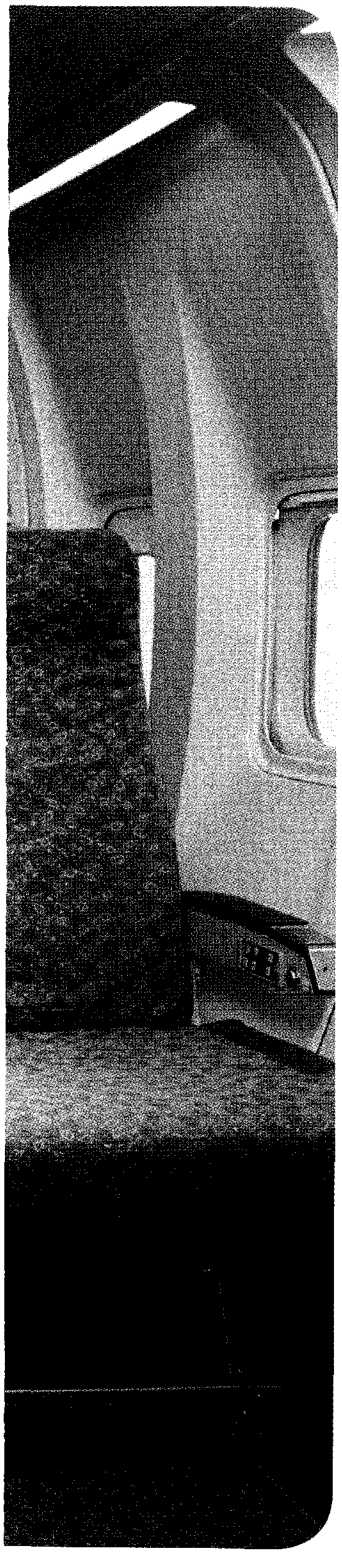
DEC. 18, 2006

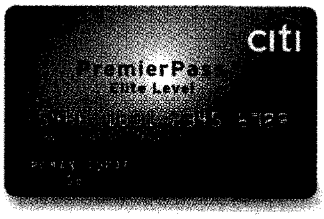
#BXBCMCJ***********5-DIGIT 19341
#NYR0538753229/3# YE03
R0601Z001
06 DEC17 07
NYR P
KH LB
BETSY AMBER
11 BUTTONWOOD DR
EXTON PA 19341-2056


Rewarding Rewards List
Transatlantic Flight x2 14,556 Miles
Transatlantic Ticket x2 $1,982
Longest Book In Print x1 $40
Total ThankYou Points 16,578
Thank You®
Rewards Network

"It's the fastest way to earn points" is in comparison to other air travel programs. Based on CompereMedia data from January through July 2006.

Card description applies only to Citi PremierPass-Elite level and does not describe the no annual fee Citi PremierPass card. Point accrual and redemption are subject to terms, conditions and limitations. For every one purchase point you earn, one flight point will become available for redemption. ©2006 Citibank. Citibank (South Dakota), N.A. Citi with Arc Design, Citi PremierPass and ThankYou Design are registered service marks of Citigroup Inc. ThankYou is a service mark of Citigroup Inc.





The Citi PremierPass® credit card helps you earn points—big time.

It's the fastest way to earn points—get ThankYou℠ Points for the tickets you buy and the miles you fly, on any airline. Plus, get points for the everyday things you buy.

Buy tickets for someone else (like Victor), and earn points for those tickets and miles, too. And that's all in addition to the miles you earn in your frequent-flier program.

Then use your points for almost anything you desire, like electronics, gift cards, and even airline tickets with no blackout dates.

The Citi PremierPass credit card.
Rewarding. Very, very, very rewarding.℠

Call 1-800-353-CITI or visit citi.com.

citi®

I AM WORKING WEALTH.

smithbarney.com/workingwealth

1.800.Smith Barney

© 2006 Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC. Smith Barney is a division of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Smith Barney is a service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. and its affiliates and is used and registered throughout the world. Citigroup and the Umbrella Device are trademarks and service marks of Citigroup Inc. or its affiliates and are used and registered throughout the world. Working wealth is a service mark of Citigroup Global Markets, Inc.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WORKING
WEALTH℠

AT SMITH BARNEY

EARN YOUR FIRST DOLLAR BY YOUR LABORS. Get up early, work late. Get up the next day and do it again. Keep doing it, even after the dollars start adding up. **SMILE AT CHALLENGES. CURSE AT IDLENESS.** Be true to your dream. Don't stop until you achieve it. Then dream another dream. And work to achieve that. **PASS ON YOUR VALUES. NOT JUST YOUR ASSETS.** Give your family a better life. And the world a better life, too. Leave no statues. Leave signs of significance. Working wealth wears no uniform and meets in no club. But you know who you are. We at Smith Barney would like to say one thing to you. **WELCOME.**

citigroup
SMITH BARNEY

THE
NEW YORKER
ONLINE

newyorker.com

THIS WEEK:

The year's most memorable movies.

Slide Show: The Bible repackaged.

An interview with the poet C. K. Williams.

THE HARD DRIVE
An archive of hundreds of past Web exclusives, including Q. & A.s, cover galleries, slide shows, Web sightings, and more.

THE FILM FILE
A decade's worth of New Yorker Film Notes.

EVENTS
A calendar of New Yorker events across the country.

NOW ONLINE:
THE NEW YORKER'S AUDIO EDITION, AVAILABLE AT AUDIBLE.COM/NEWYORKER

THE NEW YORKER

DECEMBER 18, 2006

8 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
33 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Hendrik Hertzberg on the Iraq report; the wrong Masri; Eugene Levy.

Jerome Groopman 40 MEDICAL DISPATCH
The Right to a Trial
Who should get experimental drugs?

George Saunders 48 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Ask the Optimist!

Daniel Radosh 54 ANNALS OF PUBLISHING
The Good Book Business
The boom in Bible publishing.

George Packer 60 A REPORTER AT LARGE
Knowing the Enemy
The anthropology of insurgency.

Tad Friend 70 PERSONAL HISTORY
The Playhouse
The house a mother built.

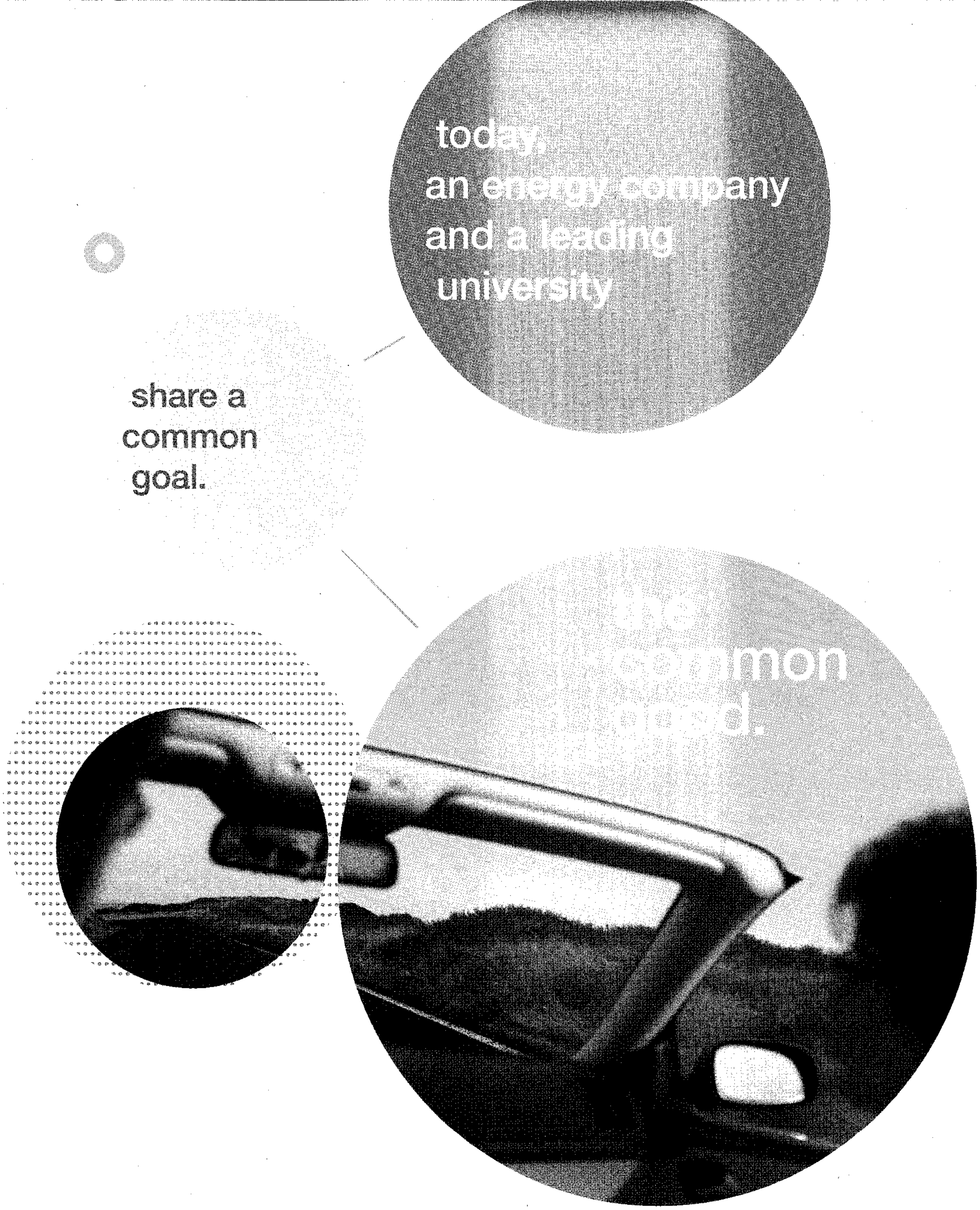
Nadine Gordimer 80 FICTION
"The First Sense"

THE CRITICS
BOOKS
Wyatt Mason 86 *The works of R. K. Narayan.*
Anthony Lane 92 *Thomas Harris's "Hannibal Rising."*
95 Books from Our Pages
John Lahr 96 THE THEATRE
"The Voysey Inheritance," "Two Trains Running."
Anthony Lane 99 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"The Good German," "Apocalypto."

POEMS
Dana Goodyear 53 "Quail"
C.K. Williams 66 "Light"

COVER *"Happy Holidays," by Benoît van Innis* DRAWINGS *Michael Maslin, David Sipress, Harry Bliss, Michael Shaw, Glen Le Lievre, Zachary Kanin, John O'Brien, Barry Blitt, Robert Mankoff, J. C. Duffy, Mike Twohy, Lee Lorenz, Gahan Wilson, William Haefeli, Kim Warp* SPOTS *Benoît van Innis*

www.newyorker.com


today,
an energy company
and a leading
university
share a
common
goal.
the
common
good.

Along with other industry leaders, we've helped establish a research center at Stanford University dedicated to finding new technologies that meet the world's growing energy needs, while dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's called the Global Climate and Energy Project, and it's the largest independent research project of its kind—ever. It's challenging the world's best minds to develop new thinking and new energy solutions. Which is good news for all of us.

ExxonMobil
Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges.™

THE ULTIMATE GIFT FOR THE ULTIMATE CARTOON FAN

Ever wonder what happens to the thousands of cartoons that never make it into these pages?

Well, wonder no more...

THE
REJECTION
COLLECTION
Cartoons You Never Saw, and Never Will See, in *The New Yorker*

EDITED BY MATTHEW DIFFEE

More than 150 rejected *New Yorker* cartoons that were a little *too* funny for this reputable magazine are now available in one hilarious volume.

Simon Spotlight Entertainment
www.SimonSays.com
A CBS COMPANY

CONTRIBUTORS

Jerome Groopman ("The Right to a Trial," p. 40) is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard. His new book, "How Doctors Think," will be published in March.

George Saunders (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 48) is the author of "In Persuasion Nation," a collection of short stories, which came out in April.

Mark Singer (The Talk of the Town, p. 34) has published five books, including "Character Studies: Encounters with the Curiously Obsessed."

Dana Goodyear (Poem, p. 53) is an editor at the magazine. Her book of poems, "Honey and Junk," is available in paperback.

Daniel Radosh ("The Good Book Business," p. 54), who has been contributing to the magazine since 1999, is writing a book about Christian pop culture.

George Packer ("Knowing the Enemy," p. 60) won this year's Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism for his book "The Assassin's Gate: America in Iraq."

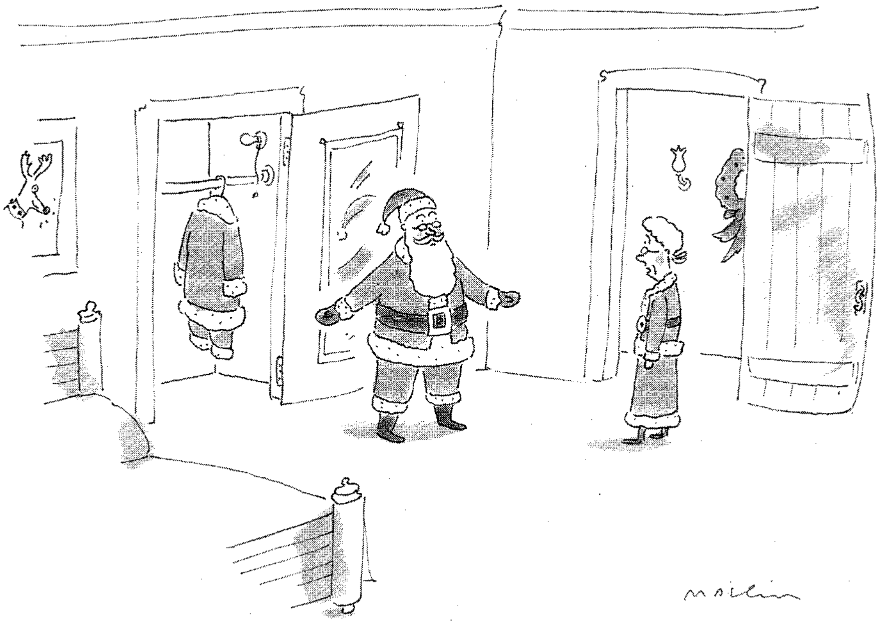
C. K. Williams (Poem, p. 66) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet. His "Collected Poems" came out last month.

Tad Friend ("The Playhouse," p. 70) has been a staff writer since 1998.

Nadine Gordimer (Fiction, p. 80), a Nobel laureate, has published thirteen novels, including "Get a Life."

Wyatt Mason (Books, p. 86) received the 2005 National Book Critics Circle citation for excellence in reviewing.

Anthony Lane (Books, p. 92; The Current Cinema, p. 99) is a film critic for the magazine and the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from *The New Yorker*." ♦



"Nice, but why don't you ever wear the brown suit I gave you?"

THE MAIL

MISREADING MACHIAVELLI

Robert Greene, the author of "The 48 Laws of Power," cites Machiavelli as the supreme mentor for mastering politicking and social manipulation ("Fresh Prince," by Nick Paumgarten, November 6th). Machiavelli's writings have long been subject to misinterpretation, usually the result of a superficial reading of "The Prince," one of his earliest and shortest works. To be sure, Machiavelli was obsessed by issues of individual autonomy, power, and the projection of a calculated image, but for him these issues were a means to a larger end of transformative action in the political—not the private economic—arena, a means to building large and powerful states that could protect their citizens and subjects from the devastating wars that plagued the Italian peninsula in his day. As a stubborn idealist, Machiavelli would probably be revolted by Greene's crude interpretation of his work, not to mention the rather self-absorbed objectives of Greene's fans, which stand in stark contrast to Machiavelli's pursuit of political ends that transcend individual self-interest.

Mark Jurdjevic
Assistant Professor of Italian Renaissance History
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario

A PLAN FOR IRAQ

George Packer dismisses our plan for a phased withdrawal from and reconstruction of Iraq as "a series of non sequiturs" (Comment, November 27th). In fact, it is a comprehensive plan with an analysis of costs, timing, and probabilities of success or failure. Unlike Packer, who favored the invasion of Iraq, we both warned before the invasion that such a step would likely lead to the mess in which we find ourselves. Before we published our plan on how to withdraw with the least possible damage to Americans, Iraqis, and America's worldwide reputation, we consulted with a wide variety of military, diplomatic, intelligence, political, academic, and business leaders, both in America and abroad, including Iraqis. The general opinion was that our plan is sensible, workable, and efficient. The essay in *Harper's* that Packer cites was a summary of just one chapter of our book, "Out of Iraq," which contains the whole of our argument and our complete plan for withdrawal. We estimate that the plan, if implemented, would dramatically improve the situation in Iraq, stop the killing of American servicemen and women, and save approximately ninety-seven per cent of the hundreds of billions of dollars we are now wasting there.

George S. McGovern
Mitchell, S.D.

William R. Polk
Vence, France

SAFE RIDING

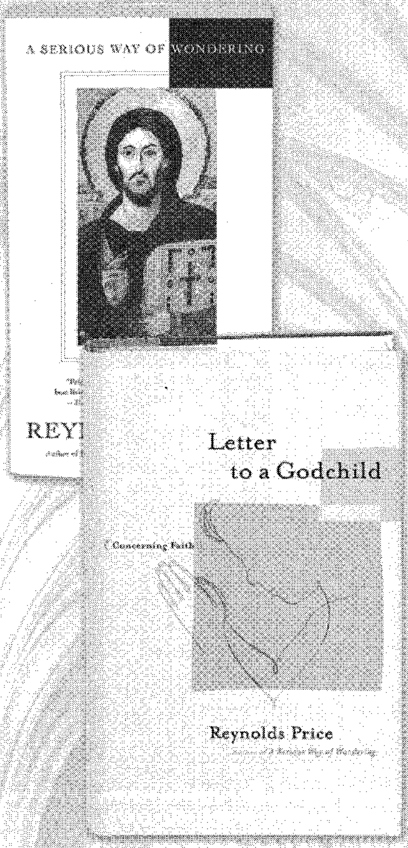
While Ben McGrath highlights the political issues surrounding safe cycling in New York City, I was disappointed to find no mention of the personal responsibility that cyclists must bear when deciding to ride ("Holy Rollers," November 13th). As McGrath points out, since 2000 more than a hundred and twenty cyclists have been fatally hit by automobiles. What he fails to mention is that, according to a report from New York City agencies, nearly all of the bicyclists who died were without helmets. As a cyclist, I believe that the city should provide more space for bicycles on the streets; only two fatal crashes have occurred when the bicyclist was in a marked bike lane. But I also hope that cyclists remember to take the necessary precautions for their safety.

Thessaly Z. La Force
New York City

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

"An insightful, challenging, and moving reflection."
—Elaine Pagels on
A Serious Way of Wondering



REYNOLDS PRICE,
"the most elegant of contemporary writers"
(*The Washington Times*),
thoughtfully explores how faith and spirituality add dimension to our lives.

SCRIBNER
A Division of Simon & Schuster
A CBS COMPANY
www.simonsays.com

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
17	18	19	13	14	15	16

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
NOSTALGIA TRIP

The 1944 film "Meet Me in St. Louis" was adapted from a series of stories by Sally Benson that first appeared in this magazine in 1942. The director, Vincente Minnelli, met his future wife Judy Garland on the film, which was the second most successful effort for M-G-M after "Gone with the Wind." Irish Repertory Theatre mounts a stage version of the musical, complete with "The Trolley Song" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." (See page 10.)

NIGHT LIFE
SACRED COWS

The English progressive-rock outfit Henry Cow, which was formed in 1968, barely made a ripple here during its ten-year history, but the shifting collective influenced countless bands with its fusion of rock, avant-jazz, chamber music, and various outré elements. This weekend at the Stone—the tiny downtown club run by the musician John Zorn—the guitarist Fred Frith, the multi-instrumentalist Tim Hodgkinson, and the drummer Chris Cutler reunite for the first time in decades. (See page 14.)

ART
STRINGING ALONG

Fred Sandback's ultra-minimal sculptures—he described planes in space with simple outlines of colored acrylic yarn—brought a startling bareness to white-box galleries when they first appeared, in the late sixties and seventies. Two Manhattan galleries, Zwirner and Zwirner & Wirth, are revisiting these works. (See page 18.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
HALLELUJAH!

The season's offerings of "Messiah," Handel's joyful masterwork on Christian themes, begin this week, with performances by the St. Thomas Church Choir and the Oratorio Society of New York. (See page 21.)

MOVIES
THE PRODUCER

MOMA's series devoted to the producer Walter Mirisch highlights those films which owe their existence to his efforts. This week's offerings include Billy Wilder's "Some Like It Hot" and "The Apartment." (See page 26.)

"A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant." Photograph by Lisa Kereszi.

© 2006 BASF Corporation

8:59
TIMER
SET
CLOCK
COUNTER
START

Take a closer look inside your medicine cabinet, and it's likely you'll find time-release or sustained-release pills. It's a concept that seemed unimaginable not too many years ago. BASF advances in bioavailability help pharmaceutical companies ensure that the medicine inside each pill is delivered precisely when you need it. And when it comes to caring for patients of today and tomorrow, precision is everything.
Learn more at basf.com/stories

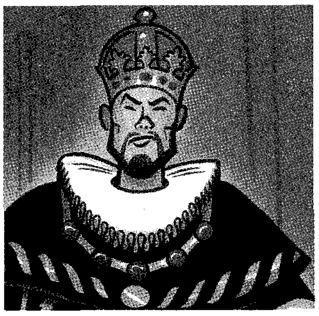
Helping Make
Products Better™

BASF
The Chemical Company

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
ROYAL BLOOD

Once again, the German bass René Pape is striking awe into Metropolitan Opera audiences with his portrayal of a suffering king. He did it first in 1999, in "Tristan und Isolde," offering so agonizingly vivid a performance as King Mark that the opera was thrown off balance. He is now singing the role of King Philip in "Don Carlo," and his voice has become a juggernaut. It has all the required basso weight and baritonal ring, and it is also amazingly rich in feeling: you hear the King's unfulfilled longings, his self-doubt, his cold resolve. Listen for how Pape rips away another layer of illusion each time he repeats the phrase "She does not love me" in the Study Scene, or for how he adds a tinge of political insanity to the line "Death, in my hands, becomes fecund." There are good performances here—Patricia Racette is finely expressive as Elisabeth, and Johan Botha is forceful in the lead—but only Samuel Ramey, as the Grand Inquisitor, matches Pape's intensity. The Met should quickly bring to town the next and potentially greatest portrait in Pape's gallery of kings: Boris Godunov, Mussorgsky's murderer tsar.

—*Alex Ross*



MAURICE VELLEKOOP

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

THE APPLE TREE
Kristin Chenoweth stars in this musical from 1966, based on three stories of temptation, by Mark Twain, Frank R. Stockton, and Jules Feiffer. Gary Griffin directs. In previews. Opens Dec. 14. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
Sandra Nordgren adapted Dickens's classic tale for this 13th Street Repertory Company production, directed by Esther Neff. In previews. Opens Dec. 14. (50 W. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

THE COAST OF UTOPIA, PART TWO: SHIPWRECK
The second chapter of Tom Stoppard's trilogy about a group of nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

LEBENSRAUM
Israel Horovitz's comic drama imagines a German chancellor inviting six million Jews to relocate to Germany. T. Ryder Smith stars. In previews. Opens Dec. 17. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS
A musical adaptation of Sally Benson's short stories depicts a family eagerly awaiting the 1904 World's Fair. In previews. Opens Dec. 14. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

THE SCENE
Tony Shalhoub and Patricia Heaton star in Theresa Rebeck's satire about self-absorbed Manhattan partygoers. Directed by Rebecca Taichman. Previews begin Dec. 14. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE . . .
The Flea Theatre and the Chelsea Art Museum present a series of ten-minute plays inspired by the children's poem, written by Christopher Durang, Len Jenkin, Elizabeth Swados, Roger Rosenblatt, and Mac Wellman. Opens Dec. 13. (41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

NOW PLAYING

ANNIE
Kathie Lee Gifford plays Miss Hannigan in a revival of the 1977 musical. Also starring Conrad John Schuck, as Daddy Warbucks, and Marissa O'Donnell, as Annie. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171.)

BARN SERIES FESTIVAL
The annual reading festival presented by LAByrinth Theatre Company includes new works by Stephen Adly Guirgis, David Bar Katz, and Megan Mostyn-Brown, among others. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-513-1012. For complete schedule, visit www.labtheater.org.)

CARRIE
The première of Theatre Couture's camp take on Stephen King's tale of high-school horror, featuring Sherry Vine and visual effects by Basil Twist. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

THE COAST OF UTOPIA, PART ONE: VOYAGE
The first of three plays by Tom Stoppard about a group of Russian intellectuals. The ensemble cast includes Ethan Hawke, Brían F. O'Byrne, Jennifer Ehle, and Billy Crudup. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

COMPANY
John Doyle's slick revival of Stephen Sondheim's musical from 1970, in which the actors play instruments as they sing, revolves around Bobby (the excellent Raúl Esparza), a commitment-averse thirty-five-year-old bachelor, and his married friends. Doyle used the same musician-performer trope in last year's thrilling revival of "Sweeney Todd"; here, despite the superb staging, it only underscores the weakness of George Furth's book. Doyle's production provides no semblance of a naturalistic environment, and the actors have little plot to give them dimension. As a result, novelty stands in for personality, and "Company" is exposed as the song cycle that it really is—albeit a spectacular one. But, for the most part, although the songs get across, the performances lack the exhilarating clout they should have. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/11/06.) (Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

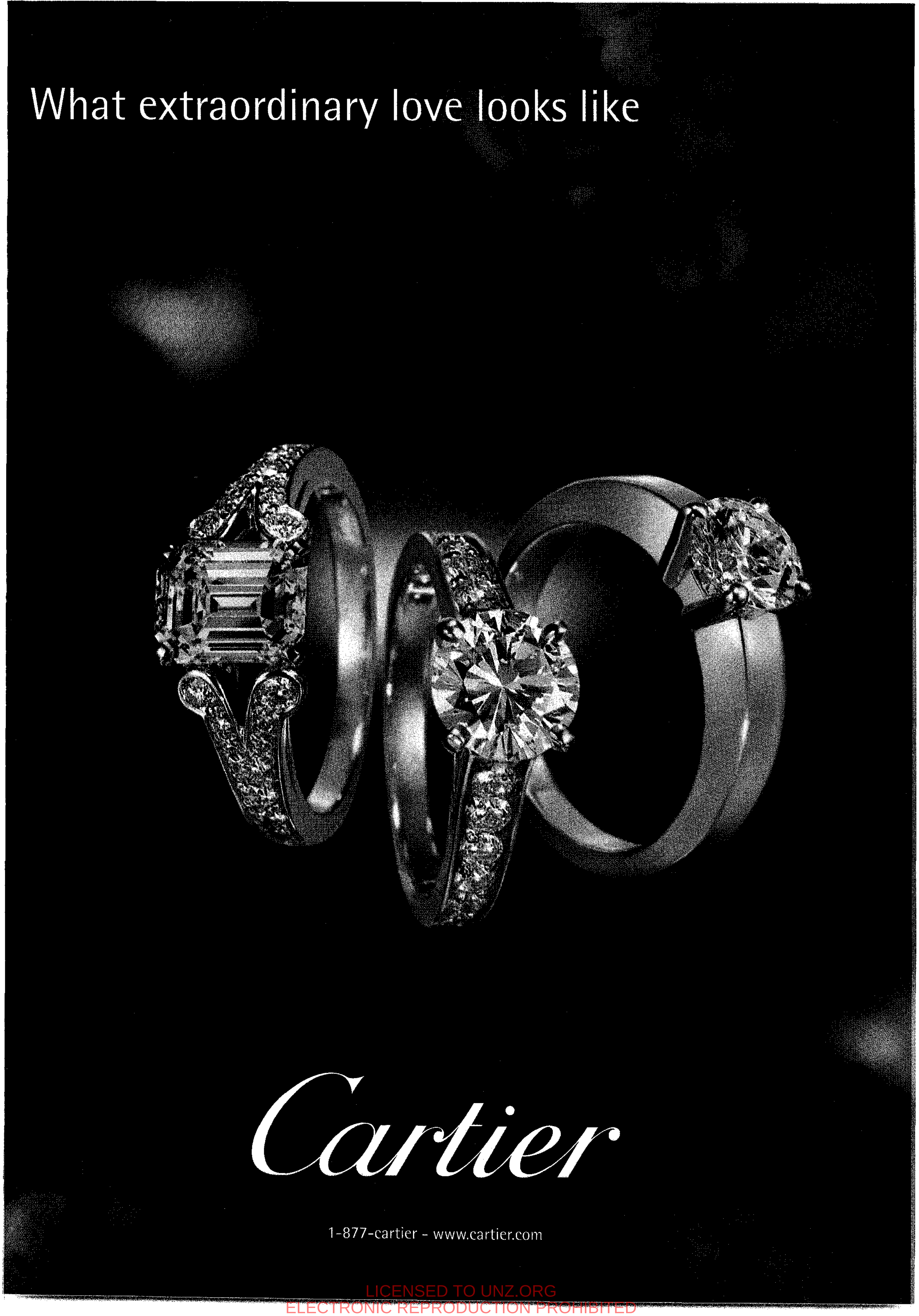
FLOYD AND CLEA UNDER THE WESTERN SKY
David Cale wrote the book and lyrics and co-wrote the country-inflected tunes (with the jazz musician Jonathan Kreisberg) for this sweetly earnest new musical about a platonic May-December romance between two hardscrabble songwriters. Cale plays the grizzled alcoholic Floyd, a nebbish who's living in his car when he's adopted by Clea (the sparkling Mary Faber), a social worker's teen-age daughter with big dreams and a formidable set of pipes. The actors bring a depth to Floyd and Clea—and to their poignant, needy friendship—that goes beyond the thin script, largely through their affecting performances of the satisfying tunes: a mixture of unexpectedly moving ballads, rocking anthems, and clever story-songs, backed by a four-piece band. Joe Calarco directs. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through Dec. 17.)

GUTENBERG! THE MUSICAL!
Scott Brown and Anthony King's comedy takes place at a backers' audition for "Gutenberg! The Musical!"—undoubtedly the worst idea for a show to come along since "Springtime for Hitler." It seems that Monty Python's whole troupe has taken possession of two New York naïfs, Bud (Christopher Fitzgerald) and Doug (Jeremy Shamos), aspiring musical-theatre writers who sing and act every role in their large-cast bio-musical based upon the travails of Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press. The citizens of a medieval German town—from drunks to monks, plus an amorous ingénue named Helvetica—all get their fifteen seconds of fame in this goofy and inspired parody of Broadway bombast. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

HIGH FIDELITY
Walter Bobbie ("Chicago") directs this musical based on Nick Hornby's best-selling novel, about a record-store owner whose girlfriend breaks up with him. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

KAOS
The director and choreographer Martha Clarke stages segments of four stories by Luigi Pirandello (which are also featured in the Taviani brothers' 1984 film of the same title) in this darkly bucolic piece set in a Sicilian village at the turn of the twentieth century. Using folk songs, movement, and live instrumentals, Clarke pushes the tales—perhaps too aggressively—to the point of near-abstraction, sacrificing a sustained interest in individual characters in favor of a broader, ensemble-based exploration of the communal life of the town. The result is a tone poem that is as rich and frustrating as a night of half-finished dreams. Performed in Italian, with English supertitles. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

REGRETS ONLY
In a new comedy by Paul Rudnick, presented by Manhattan Theatre Club and directed by Christopher Ashley, Christine Baranski plays Tibby, a Park Avenue socialite whose husband (David Rasche) is drafted by the White House to consult on a same-sex-marriage ban, much to the vexation of her gay best friend, a world-class fashion designer (George Grizzard). Rudnick supplies his leading lady with an arsenal of memorable punch lines—and Baranski, with her singsong hauteur, may be the perfect vessel for his droll wit—but he seems reluctant to take his characters to task for their complacency. (City Center, Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)


What extraordinary love looks like
Cartier
1-877-cartier - www.cartier.com

SPRING AWAKENING
This musical, which originated at the Atlantic Theatre Company, is based on Frank Wedekind's play from 1891, about the secret inner lives of teen-agers. With music by Duncan Sheik, book and lyrics by Steven Sater, and choreography by Bill T. Jones. Michael Mayer directs. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

TWO SEPTEMBER
Mac Wellman's philosophically ambitious and periodically absorbing play is set in the late nineteen-forties in Washington and Hanoi, embroidering the lives of the blacklisted American writer Josephine Herbst (Jayne Haynes) and the young Ho Chi Minh (Arthur Acuna). Here Ho is an idealistic revolutionary who forges a dialogue with the top American military official in Hanoi in the hope that his message will receive a sympathetic airing in Washington; he even paraphrases the American Declaration of Independence in his landmark speech of September 2, 1945, declaring Vietnam's freedom from the colonial past. Wellman examines the links that connect seemingly disparate lives during this brief postwar lull, in scenes that are alternately opaque and deviously direct. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. Through Dec. 16.)

TWO TRAINS RUNNING
Signature Theatre Company continues its August Wilson series with this drama set in a Pittsburgh diner in 1969. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

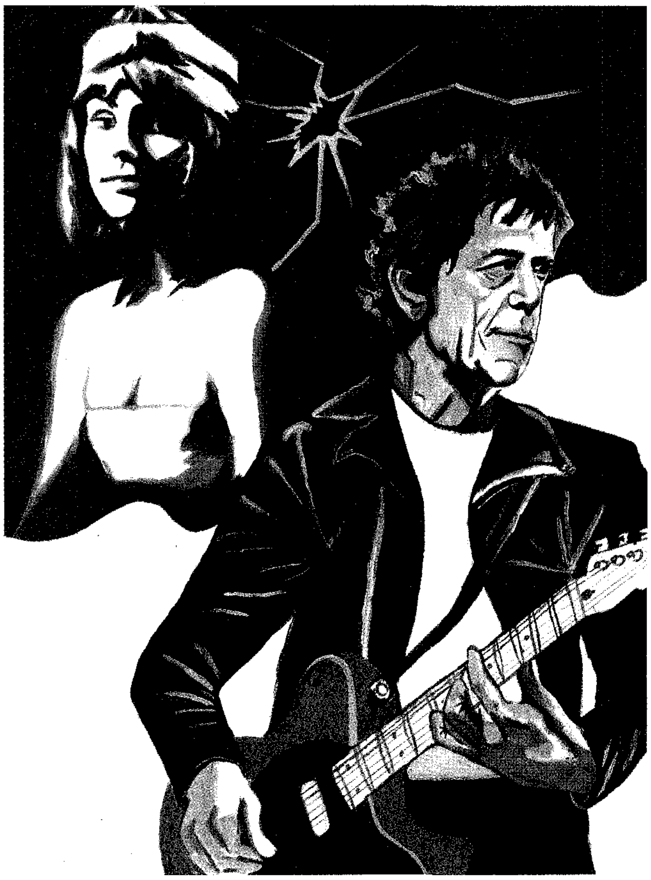
THE VERTICAL HOUR
David Hare's new drama (under the tentative direction of Sam Mendes) is glib but not good, a sort of boulevard cocktail of contemporary concerns—terrorism, the Iraq war, the state of British and American democracies—to which he adds a dollop of Oedipal struggle, a pinch of Freud, and a dash of romantic confusion. Hare contrives to get a wary estranged Englishman named Philip (Andrew Scott) and his apparently feckless liberal doctor father, Oliver (Bill Nighy), to sit around the table with Philip's American girlfriend, Nadia (Julianne Moore, making her Broadway début), an Ivy League professor of political studies, who is also a former foreign correspondent turned pundit and apologist for the Iraq war. Nonetheless, the play is a sort of guilty pleasure, owing almost entirely to the expertise of Nighy, whose droll performance is a master class in theatrical poise. (12/11/06) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

A VERY MERRY UNAUTHORIZED CHILDREN'S SCIENTOLOGY PAGEANT
The return of the Les Freres Corbusier hit, in which a cast of grade-school children bring the famous Scientologists Tom Cruise, Kirstie Alley, and John Travolta, and Scientology's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, to life in a mock Christmas pageant. (4th Street Theatre, 83 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE
Atlantic Theatre Company presents the New York première of David Mamet's adaptation of Harley Granville-Barker's play. (Reviewed in this issue.) (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

Also Playing

THE AMERICAN PILOT: City Center, Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. **ARMS AND THE MAN:** Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802. **A CHORUS LINE:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **GREY GARDENS:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **HEARTBREAK HOUSE:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. Through Dec. 17. **THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **MARTIN SHORT: FAME BECOMES ME:** Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MY NAME IS RACHEL CORRIE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100. Through Dec. 17. **NO CHILD . . . :** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **AN OAK TREE:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **ROOM SERVICE:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555. **SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER:** Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. **THE WEDDING SINGER:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.


Lou Reed performs his album "Berlin" at St. Ann's Warehouse.

GIBB SLIFE

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

ABRONS ARTS CENTER
466 Grand St., at Pitt St. (212-598-0400)—The folks from the downtown club Tonic move to slightly fancier digs for a seasonal celebration. This Georgian Revival theatre, which was built in 1915 as a project of the Henry Street Settlement, has hosted the likes of Aaron Copland, Dizzy Gillespie, and John Cage. On Dec. 16, "The Naughty and Nice Holiday Extravaganza" features the singer **Chocolate Genius**, the duo **Dean Wareham** and **Britta Phillips**, the group **Elysian Fields**, and others.

BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—Dec. 16: The cobbler turned folk-pop vocalist **Ray Lamontagne**, who recently released his second album, "Till the Sun Turns Black."

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Dec. 19: **Sean Lennon.** Eight years after the fabled progeny's upbeat début LP, "Into the Sun," Lennon has returned with the album "Friendly Fire." It dabbles in the same brand of subtle, psychedelic pop, but it is a slightly more melancholy affair. (It was inspired by a love triangle and the death of a friend.) Look for Lennon to bring some whisper-quiet catharsis from the studio to the stage.

CARNEGIE HALL
57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—Dec. 13: "The Wainwright Family & Friends Christmas" finds **Martha** and **Rufus Wainwright** celebrating in high style.

GALAPAGOS
70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-782-5188)—Dec. 16: **One Ring Zero,** two guys from Brooklyn who turn out a literary klezmer-Gypsy-midway-music hybrid using the accordion, the toy piano, various household appliances, and other exotic instruments, are joined by the English folksinger **Scott Matthew,** who recently appeared in the independent film "Shortbus."

HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM
Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171)—Dec. 16-17 and Dec. 19: The Hasidic reggae performer **Matisyahu** and guests celebrate Hanukkah.

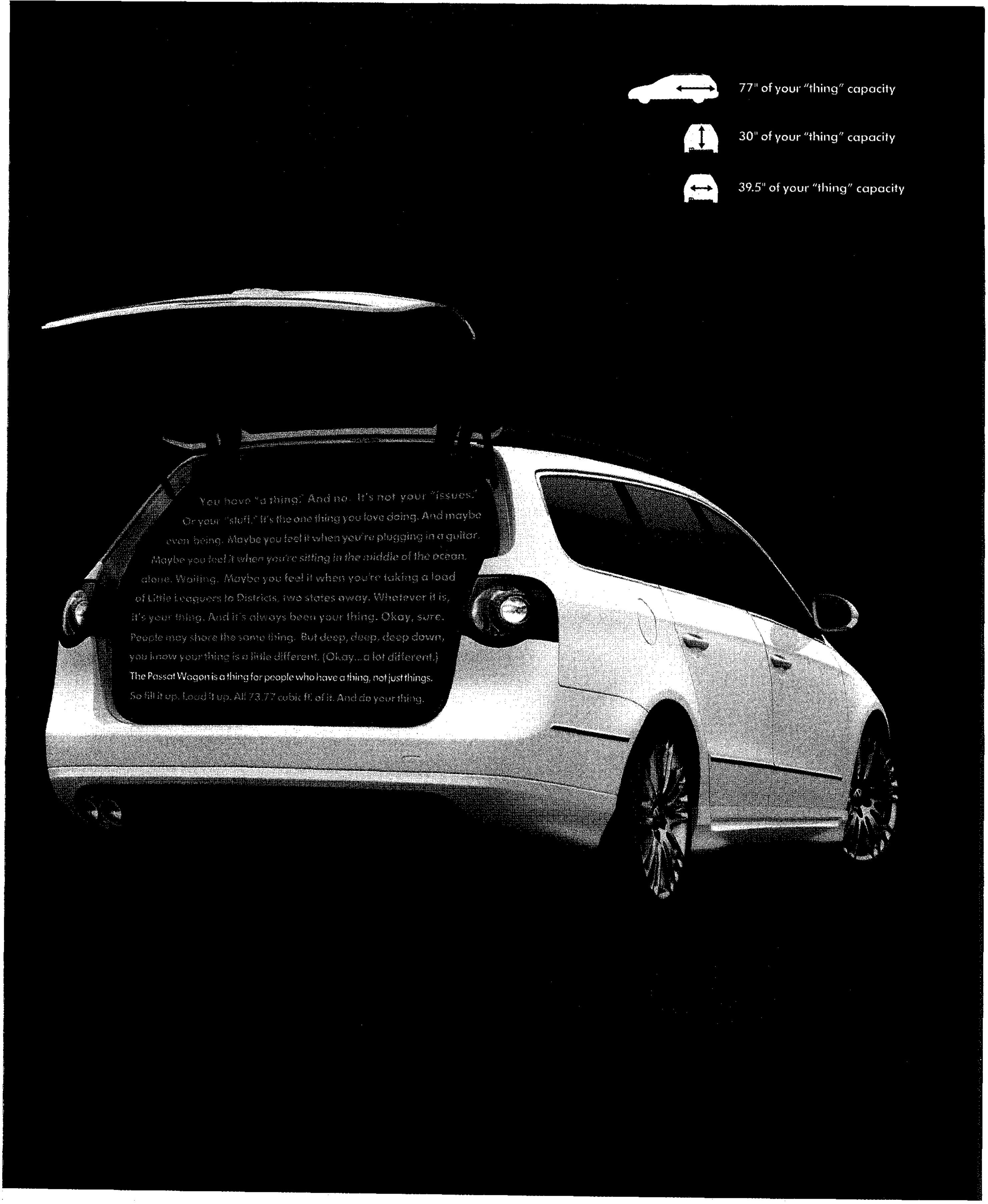
IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Dec. 14: **GWAR** (an acronym for "God, What an Awful Racket") carries on their violently cartoony shtick. With ridiculous costumes and vulgar humor, GWAR lives by the credo "No stain, no gain," and remains committed to soaking much of their adoring audience in fake blood (and other fluids). They have a new studio album, "Beyond Hell" (featuring such gems as "War Is All We Know" and "Back in Crack"), but the GWAR live experience remains more about gore than about actual music.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Dec. 14-16: The pop archeologists of the **Loser's Lounge** sift through the back catalogue of Elton John. Dec. 17: The New York-based outfit **Ethel** has the appearance of a string quartet and the spirit of a rock band. Founded eight years ago by Juilliard-trained musicians, Ethel recently toured with Joe Jackson and Todd Rundgren, and just released its second album, "Light," on Bang on a Can's label, Canteloupe Music. This show features the singer **Jill Sobule** as a guest.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Dec. 14-15: **Good for the Jews** is a new band put together by the journalist and musician Rob Tannenbaum, one of the creators of the revue "What I Like About Jew." Like that effort, this group—featuring **David Fagin,** the front man for the power-pop group the Rosenbergs—takes a humorous look at Tannenbaum's faith, an approach that comes in handy at this time of the year. The holiday show includes appearances by the comedians **Todd Barry** and **Rachel Feinstein** and the singer-songwriter **Lisa Loeb.** They'll be joined on Thursday by the tongue-in-cheek country singer **Tammy Faye Starlite,** and on Friday by the dramatic vocalist **Julian Fleisher.**

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Dec. 15: The "Z-100 Jingle Ball." **Evanescence, Nelly Furtado, Nick Lachey,** the **Killers,** the **Pussycat Dolls,** and other pop luminaries turn out for a night of Yuletide cheer.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE
38 Water St., Brooklyn (718-254-8779)—Dec. 14-17: **Lou Reed,** the guitarist and main songwriter for the Velvet Underground, became a glam-rock icon with his 1972 solo album, "Transformer," which included the sexually ambiguous hit "Walk on the Wild Side." He followed up that release a year later with "Berlin," a dark song cycle about



77" of your "thing" capacity

30" of your "thing" capacity

39.5" of your "thing" capacity

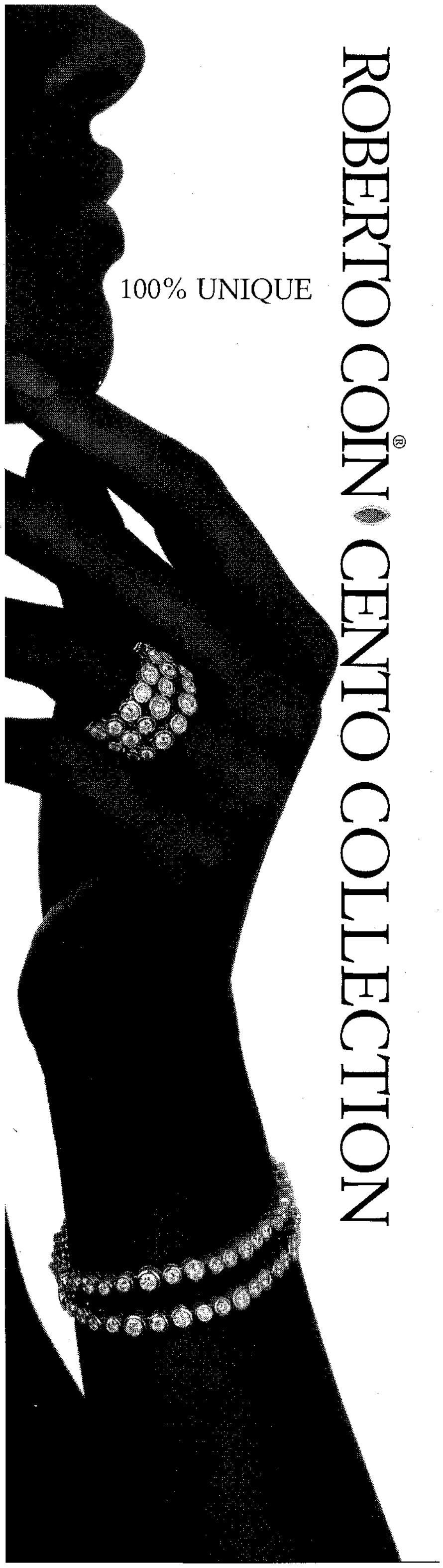
You have "a thing." And no. It's not your "issues." Or your "stuff." It's the one thing you love doing. And maybe even being. *Maybe you feel it when you're plugging in a guitar. Maybe you feel it when you're sitting in the middle of the ocean,* alone. Waiting. *Maybe* you feel it when you're taking a load of Little Leaguers to Districts, two states away. Whatever it is, it's your thing. And it's always been your thing. Okay, sure. People may share the same thing. *But* deep, deep, deep down, you know your thing is a little different. (Okay...a lot different.)

The Passat Wagon is a thing for people who have a thing, not just things.

So fill it up. Load it up. All 73.77 cubic ft. of it. And do your thing.

Passat Wagon

©2006 Volkswagen of America, Inc. *With rear seats folded.



APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCE
OF THE CENTO DIAMOND.
VISIT WWW.CENTOCOLLECTION.COM
1.877.CENTO-100

expat drug addicts struggling with love and death in a divided city. The album received a mixed critical response and was a commercial flop. Reportedly, Reed has never performed "Berlin" live, but he's doing so here on four nights, with the assistance of the producers **Bob Ezrin** (who helped create the album) and **Hal Willner**, the singers **Sharon Jones** and **Antony**, the artist and set designer **Julian Schnabel**, and others.

SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE
2 W. 64th St. (212-874-5210)—The Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter **Judith Owen** and her husband, the comedic actor **Harry Shearer**, invite the audience to get in on the action at their holiday sing-along.

THE STONE
Avenue C at 2nd St. (No phone)—In Cambridge, England, in 1968, as youthful revolution swept Europe, the composer, guitarist, and wildcat improviser **Fred Frith** formed the band Henry Cow with the multi-instrumentalist **Tim Hodgkinson** and, a few years later, the drummer **Chris Cutler**, to traffic in avant-progressive rock and jazz with an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach. The shifting group of fellow-travellers (the band's outlook was Communist) lasted a decade and was an integral part of the Rock in Opposition movement, a late-seventies anti-music-business campaign with ideas familiar to members of today's indie-rock scene. On the weekend of Dec. 15-17, Frith, Hodgkinson, and Cutler reunite for the first time in nearly three decades. The first night, the electric bassist **Hugh Hopper**, of the like-minded Soft Machine, will also be on hand. (For more information, visit www.thestonenyc.com.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Jan. 13: The vocalist **Andrea Marcovicci** invokes the spirit of Hildegarde, the larger-than-life, if now little-remembered, queen of mid-century American night life.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Dec. 13-16: **Roy Haynes.** Fronting his Fountain of Youth band, the octogenarian drummer plays with the vigor and inventiveness of musicians born decades after his own inspiring work with the likes of Young, Parker, Coltrane, and Corea.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Dec. 14-17: A musical institution by now, the **Manhattan Transfer** flaunts tight harmonies and dispenses infectious good humor. Expect selections from their new album, "An Acapella Christmas."

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Dec. 12-17: **Randy Weston's African Rhythms.** The pianist and composer's band combines the rhythmic diversity of the African diaspora with the lyrical smarts of New York bebop. Weston's percussive energy can be bracing—this is world music that never devalues its sources.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Dec. 13-17: **Joey DeFrancesco,** an acolyte of the late father of Hammond-organ jazz-funk, Jimmy Smith, will be joined by two guest soloists, the vibraphonist **Bobby Hutcherson** and the saxophonist **Ron Blake.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The Charles Mingus legacy bands—the sizable Mingus Big Band and Mingus Orchestra, along with the smaller Mingus Dynasty—are in rotation on Tuesdays.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—Dec. 14-16: "Red Hot Holiday Stomp." **Wynton Marsalis** and friends—including **Wycliffe Gordon, Herlin Riley,** and **Don Vappie**—jazz up the season in their customary rousing fashion.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Dec. 15-17: **Mose Allison,** a caustically brilliant songwriter and eccentric pianist and singer, hasn't recorded an album in a while, but his stock of originals ("Your Mind Is on Vacation") and recontextualized standards ("You Are My Sunshine") guarantees an evening brimming with wit and personality.

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—Dec. 15: The pianist **Laszlo Gardony,** supported by the drummer **Yoron Israel** and the bassist **John Lockwood,** performs material from his new album, "Natural Instinct."

TABLES FOR TWO
BOQUERIA

53 W. 19th St. (212-255-4160)—There's something inherently social about tapas—the free-form sharing of dishes, the way a quick snack can expand into a banquet or glasses of sangria can blur into pitchers. At Boqueria, a new tapas bar in Chelsea named after Barcelona's food market, the sense of informality is enhanced by a long communal table that dominates the dining room and by the fact that all the seats are barstool height. The result is a convivial room, almost always populated by a thirty-something crowd.

The menu delivers some familiar favorites with original touches. A brandade of potato and salt cod is as creamy and comforting as one would expect, but toasted breadcrumbs and crispy arugula give it a crunch like that of Japanese deep-fried seaweed. Shrimp fried in oil, fiercely flavored with garlic and guindilla peppers, are most notable for the delicacy with which they are cooked—not a second too long, so that each one bursts in the mouth. The deep, vinegary tang of a lentil stew is heightened with ingeniously thin round crisps of Serrano ham—porcine Communion wafers—and poached egg. Even the simplest Catalan dish of all, oiled bread scraped with garlic and tomato, is prepared with obvious care.

Not everything is a success. One recent evening, an insipid special of snapper fillet, on a bed of watery vegetable strips, suggested that maybe it's best to stick to the canonical offerings. Paella proved similarly underwhelming, as a good deal of the rice was welded to the inside of the pan. But another rice dish, the risotto-like *arroz cremoso*, was a successful innovation, its base flavors of salt cod, mussel broth, and Manchego sweetened by a very unexpected, and un-Spanish, ingredient: lychees.

The sheer popularity of the place means that it can be lively to the point of insanity. (Reservations are not accepted, and there is little room in which to wait.) Furthermore, the high chairs have the same effect as a low ceiling, subjecting diners to noise levels sufficient to provoke deep animal panic. Eying a long tiled wall, one felt that it might be an idea to swathe it—and possibly some of the guests—in carpeting. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Dishes $6-$26.)

—*Leo Carey*

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—The pianist **Cedar Walton** (here with his trio Dec. 12-17, and again with his quartet Dec. 19-24) has a touch of the Clark Kent/Superman dichotomy: beneath his mild-mannered surface lies a player of steely power and intelligence. In a trio setting, his refined improvising, lucid and efficient, shines. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—More than two million soldiers returned to Germany with permanent disabilities after the First World War. It's a useful statistic to remember, for the Weimar-era sophisticates pictured in **"Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s"** were caught between the rock of this trauma and the hard place of Hitler. Scabrous, boisterous, and scary, the paintings and drawings—by George Grosz, Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, and others—limn a demimonde of mannish girls and girlie men, of artists and addicts and war profiteers. All the work is riveting, and painfully timely now. In the end, the show becomes a de-facto homage to Dix, who presents his sitters as sympathetic ghouls caught in a garish imperial twilight. Through Feb. 19. ♦ **"Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall: An Artist's Country Estate."** Through May 20. ♦ **"Americans in Paris, 1860-1900."** Through Jan. 28. ♦ **"Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde."** Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"New Photography 2006"** features the work of Jonathan Monk, Barbara Probst, and Jules Spinatsch. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"Manet and the Execution of Maximilian."** Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Brice Marden: A Retrospective of Paintings and Drawings."** Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"Eye on Europe: Prints, Books, and Multiples, 1960 to Now."** Through Jan. 1. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Spanish Painting from El Greco to Picasso: Time, Truth, and Memory."** Through March 28. ♦ **"Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York."** Through Jan. 21. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980-2005."** Through Feb. 11. ♦ All roads in modernism lead back to Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy in **"Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World."** Through Jan. 21. ♦ **"Picasso and American Art."** Through Jan. 28. ♦ Works by Edward Hopper fill the fifth floor, including "Nighthawks," on loan from the Art Institute of Chicago. Through Dec. 31. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life, 1990-2005."** Through Jan. 21. ♦ **"Tigers of Wrath: Watercolors by Walton Ford."** Through Jan. 28. ♦ **"Ron Mueck."** Through Feb. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Inconsolable Memories,"** by Stan Douglas, the Canadian master of recondite film and video, montages scraps and elaborately produced reënactments of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's classic movie "Memories of Underdevelopment" (1968), about a bourgeois intellectual adrift in post-revolutionary Cuba. The time switches from the Bay of Pigs era to the 1980 Mariel boatlift, which the hero, at the last minute, declines to join. He is trapped, perhaps for eternity, in a bleak existential fiction with urgent but ungraspable political import. Also shown are Douglas's recent, spectacular color

tourneau

movado se®. bold sports elegance in stainless steel.
blue museum dial. $1,095. movado.com

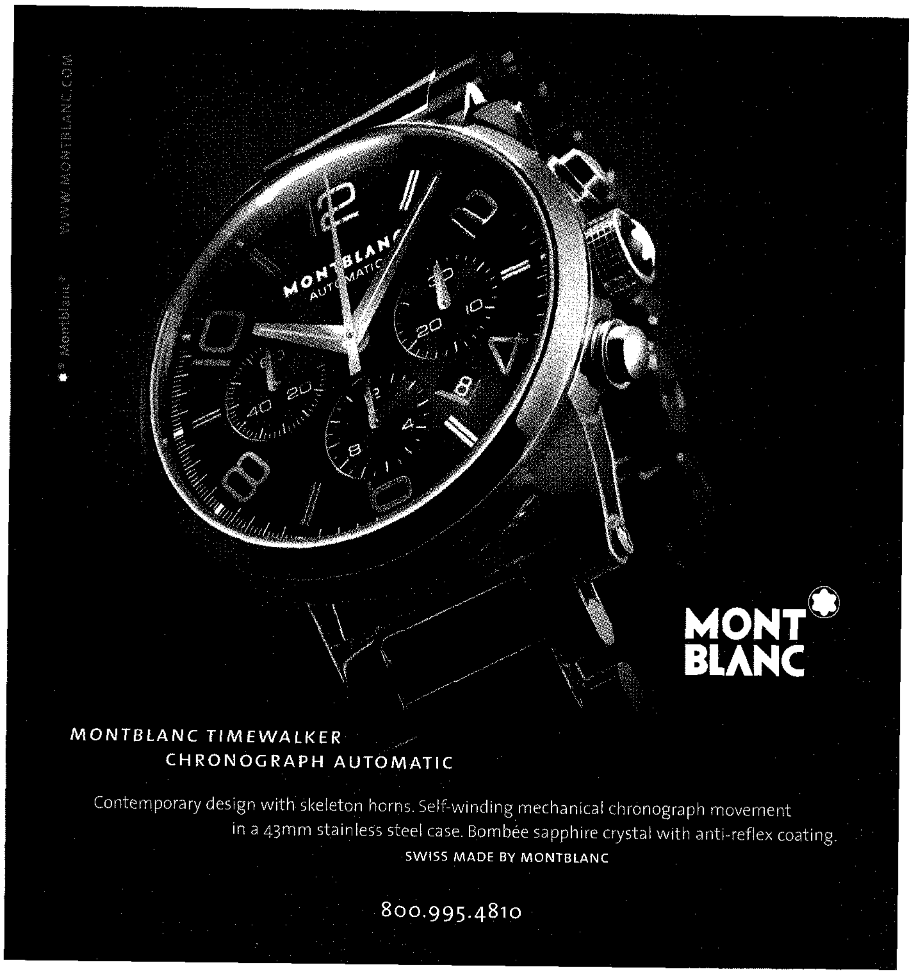
MOVADO
the art of time

Make her eyes light up.

American Girl Place
CHICAGO · NEW YORK · LOS ANGELES
Our personal shoppers will help you select the perfect present for your American girl.

American Girl Place™
CHICAGO · NEW YORK · LOS ANGELES

Call 1-877-AG PLACE for reservations. Visit americangirl.com for more information.

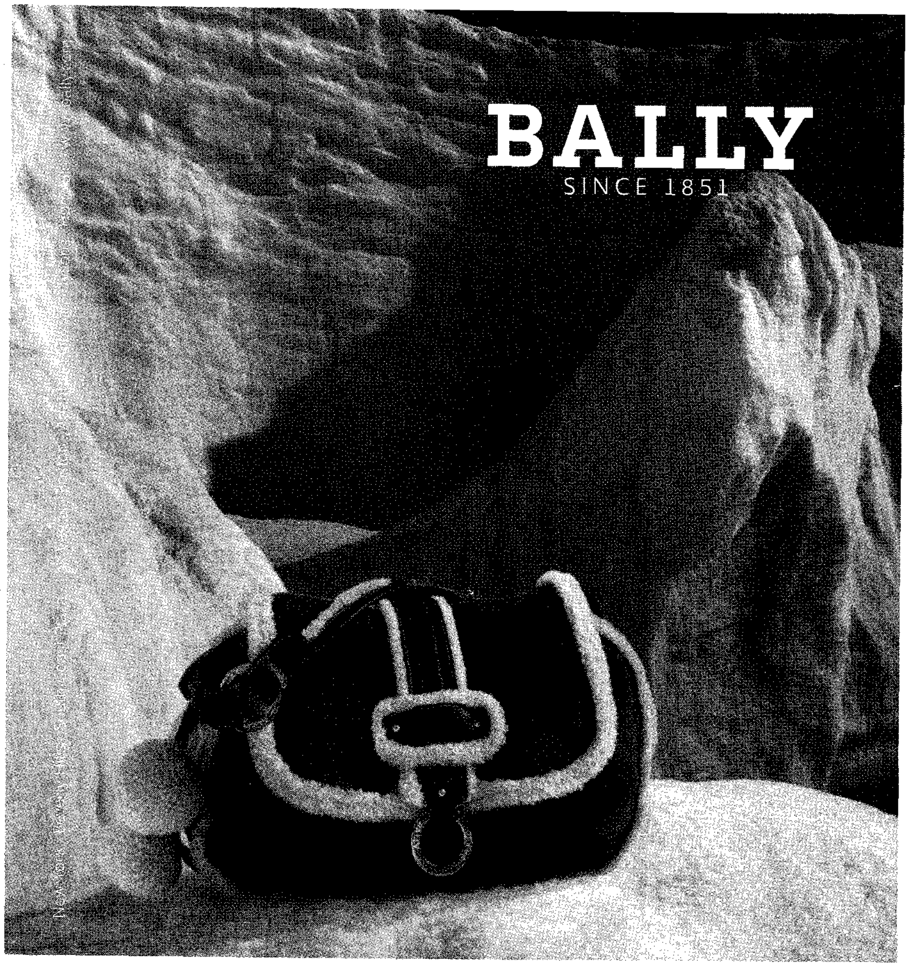


MONTBLANC
AUTOMATIC
MONT BLANC
© Montblanc® WWW.MONTBLANC.COM

MONTBLANC TIMEWALKER
CHRONOGRAPH AUTOMATIC

Contemporary design with skeleton horns. Self-winding mechanical chronograph movement in a 43mm stainless steel case. Bombée sapphire crystal with anti-reflex coating.
SWISS MADE BY MONTBLANC

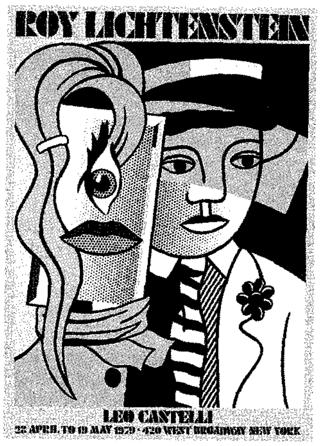
800.995.4810



BALLY
SINCE 1851

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE POSTERATI

Art posters—several hundred of them—went on view last week at the Paula Cooper gallery, in a colorful display organized by the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. Spanning more than half a century, from Léger's 1949 retrospective at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, in Paris, to an Adam McEwen show at Klagsbrun this fall, the show offers art history at a discount. Sharp-eyed observers can trace the poster's evolution from a mass-produced conveyor of information to an alternative art form; many of the examples here were designed by the artist whose work they announce, and a large proportion of them are signed. More than two hundred and thirty artists are represented, including Picasso, Duchamp, Chagall, Dubuffet, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns, the foundation's co-founder, who rounded up a majority of the donated posters and supervised their salon-style hanging. "It's going to be quite a mess," Johns said just before they went up, "but I hope an interesting mess."


ROY LICHTENSTEIN
LEO CASTELLI
28 APRIL TO 19 MAY 1979 · 420 WEST BROADWAY NEW YORK

—*Calvin Tomkins*

photographs of dilapidated relics of pre-revolutionary Havana, such as a movie palace now used as a carpentry workshop. Through March 18. ♦ "Africa Comics" gathers original drawings for a very wide range of strikingly adept cartoon fiction from twenty countries, most in French or English. Themes of social injustice and civic betterment predominate, indicating cultures in which romance, comedy, and fantasies of individual heroism have scant purchase. A sense of angry and aspiring, collective dynamism suffuses the show. Through March 18. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

WILSON A. BENTLEY
Between 1885 (when, just twenty years old, he learned how to use a camera with a microscope attachment) and 1931 (when he died), Bentley photographed thousands of individual snowflakes. Fifteen of these vintage prints are here, each one unique and none much bigger than a credit card, along with the image of a frost formation that looks like a Futurist's lace curtain. (Another group of Bentley's snowflakes is on view at Hasted Hunt, in Chelsea.) While these straightforward pictures would not be out of place in a science text, their simple beauty puts them in another realm. And knowing that these kaleidoscopic starbursts melted within seconds of being fixed on film makes Bentley's record of them all the more extraordinary. Through Dec. 22. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 212-838-0333.)

KATSUMI WATANABE
Working as an itinerant photographer in Tokyo's honky-tonk Shinjuku district between 1966 and 1980, Watanabe made these portraits of prostitutes, bar girls, gangsters, wannabe gangsters, and drag queens for their subjects. Although Watanabe's style is naïve and the results fairly crude, his black-and-white snapshots are fascinating, both as raw sociological data and funky low-life night-life exposé. Tough guys strolling the street in packs are no match for figures of indeterminate sex, some in traditional kimonos but many more in miniskirts, go-go boots, and/or very bad drag. One character anticipates Leigh Bowery's clownish transformations by combining a white tulle skirt with white lipstick, white eyeliner, and a deep fake tan. Through Dec. 22. (Roth, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067.)

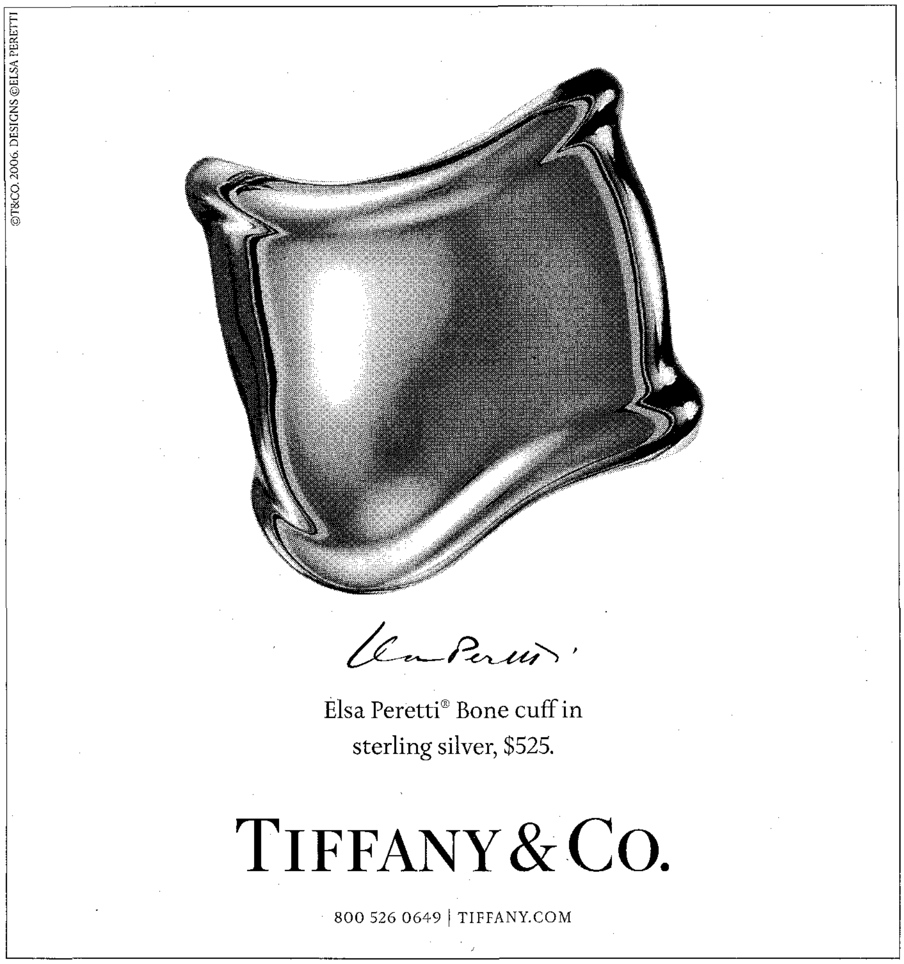
Short List

JOHN CURRIN: Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through Dec. 22. **GREGORY CREWDSON:** Skarstedt, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 212-737-2060. Through Dec. 20. **ROBERT POLIDORI:** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-750-7070. Through Dec. 23. **SIGMAR POLKE:** Michael Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through Jan. 13. **FRED SANDBACK:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through Jan. 20.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

DAVE ANDERSON
Anderson's black-and-white photographs of the rural town of Vidor, Texas, are likely to remind viewers of Keith Carter (who was briefly his teacher), Shelby Lee Adams, and Andrea Modica. Like them, Anderson makes work that, at its best, is as clear-eyed and unsentimental as it is soulful and sympathetic. His landscapes and still-lifes, while hardly throwaway, are largely atmospheric, setting the stage for portraits that are more complicated and engaging. In one of the strongest, a wiry man smoking in his yard is so curdled with rage and disgust that he looks as though he's about to implode. Through Dec. 23. (ClampArt, 521-531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020.)

ROY LICHTENSTEIN, "STEPPING OUT" (1978) © ESTATE OF ROY LICHTENSTEIN

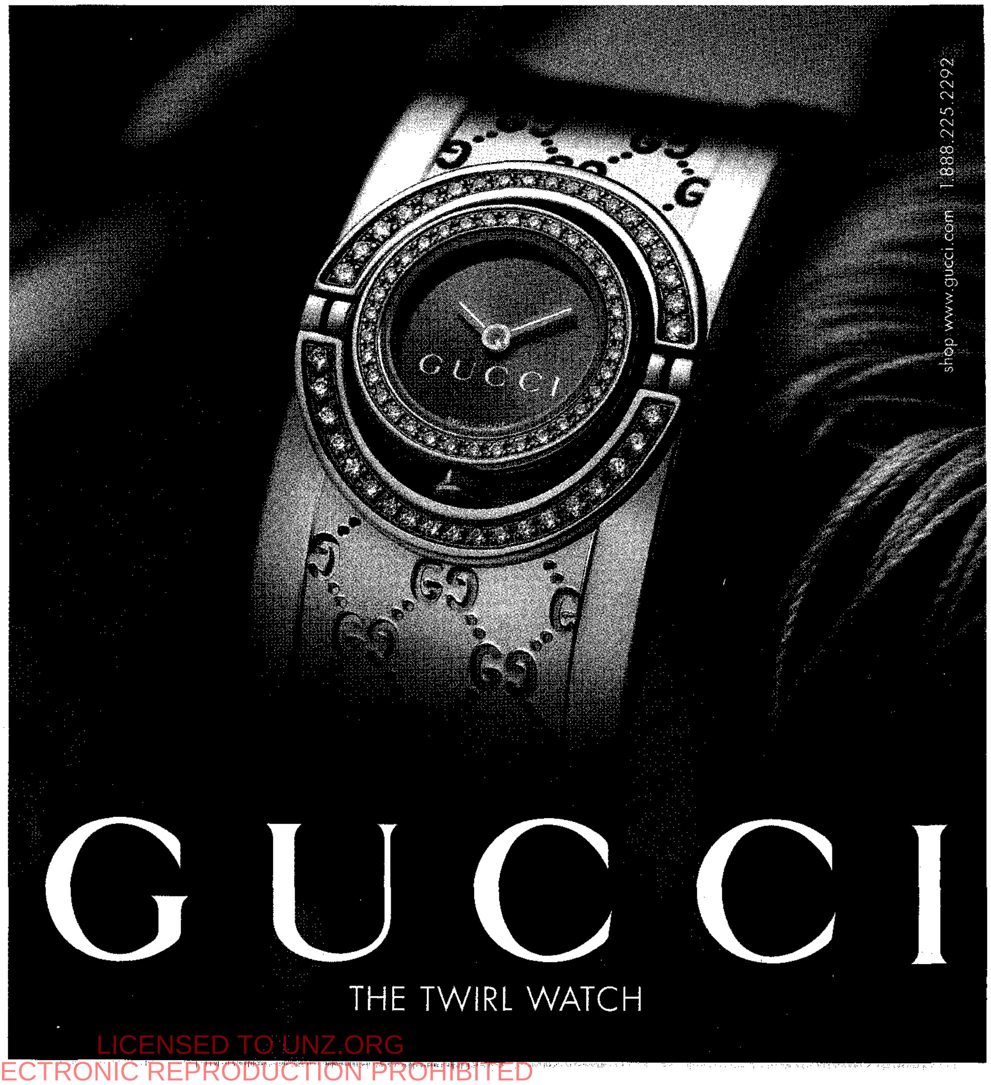

©T&CO. 2006. DESIGNS ©ELSA PERETTI

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti® Bone cuff in
sterling silver, $525.

TIFFANY & CO.

800 526 0649 | TIFFANY.COM


shop www.gucci.com 1.888.225.2292

GUCCI

THE TWIRL WATCH

ROBERT BECHTLE
Everybody's favorite Photo-Realist shows hushed, sneakily powerful oils and charcoals of ultra-ordinary San Francisco-area streets replete with poky houses, perfunctory vegetation, and personable parked cars. Light and shade are as they must be, given the instant when a camera clicked. But look, and keep looking. Details are deftly abstracted. Colors are keenly indefinite. The pictures marshal decisions about how the world confronts and, very precisely, overtaxes an honest eye. Realism isn't a trick, Bechtle demonstrates. It is a whole lot of tricks, ganging up to shatter our routine delusion that we know what we see. Through Jan. 6. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

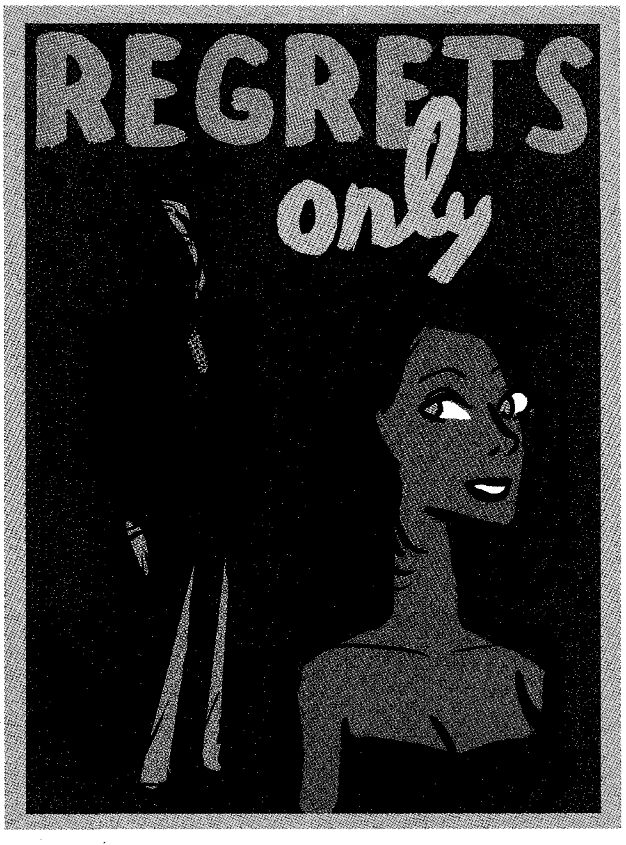
VICTOR GRIPPO
The work of the Argentinean artist Grippo (1936-2002) has a poetic bent that's at odds with the more rationalist Conceptualist pieces produced on this side of the equator. Potatoes nestled in a wall unit and linked by electrodes serve as a stand-in for the expanded map of human consciousness. A medicine cabinet filled with aging supplies is poignantly titled "Argentina, 1978." And "Tiempo," another sculpture involving potatoes and electrical hardware, furthers its meditation on temporality with a text from Dostoyevsky's "The Devils": "Time is not an object, but an idea. It will be extinguished in the mind." Through Dec. 20. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-367-7474.)

THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT
An underknown charmer, Lanigan-Schmidt has been making gay (in both senses), unabashedly religious constructions and collages of pretty trash for four decades. Combining redolences of Byzantine splendor and slum serendipity, "Placemats & Potholders (Memory & Desire)" ravishes with stapled arrays of, among many other things, colored metal foil, wadded plastic wrap, bits of silver and gold doilies, and scraps of arcane photographs and text from movies and magazines. If the work is froufrou, it's once-in-a-lifetime froufrou—pure of heart and unremittingly spunky. Lanigan-Schmidt fandom is a cult open to everybody. Through Dec. 16. (Zoubok, 533 W. 23rd St. 212-675-7490.)

FRED W. MCDARRAH
McDarrah, the *Village Voice's* photographer about town for thirty crucial years, is famous for documenting the city's avant-garde scene and its most colorful denizens, from Jack Kerouac, Bob Dylan, and Willem de Kooning to Andy Warhol, Patti Smith, and Carolee Schneemann. This spirited, sprawling show of vintage prints focusses primarily on his portraits of artists and writers but also includes musicians and other performers. Even if viewers don't remember the way we were, McDarrah's you-are-there moments will let them cozy up to Jasper Johns, Ethel Scull, and Leo Castelli at a 1960 opening, or nudge into the crush around Frank O'Hara at the Cedar Tavern. Just don't spill your drink. Through Jan. 6. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

J. MORGAN PUETT
Art and commerce have always been uneasy bedfellows, except for artists like Puett, who embrace both simultaneously. From 1985 to 1997, Puett ran a workshop in SoHo, designing clothing for the downtown crowd, and hosted everything from exhibitions and concerts to poetry and tarot-card readings. This revisiting features a large installation of effects left over after the business closed—cancelled checks, payroll records, clothing on racks (including a prototype for Suzanne Vega's wedding gown)—all dipped in preservative beeswax. Like a time capsule, Puett's artifacts present SoHo in the moments before it succumbed to boutique mania. It's also, inarguably, the best-smelling show in town. Through Dec. 16. (Alexander Gray, 526 W. 26th St. 212-399-2636.)

ANNIE RATTI
Advance notices for Ratti's show promised that she would flood the subterranean gallery space to create "New York Water Room," an exciting update of Walter De Maria's long-term SoHo installation "The New York Earth Room." Sadly, logistics interfered, and the project was downgraded to "Evaporated Sea." Rough crystals of salt cover the floor. A re-creation of Albert Lamorisse's 1956 short film "The Red Balloon," shot in New York (and without the lonely boy protagonist), is projected on the walls and accompanied by a mournful Erik Satie soundtrack. Visitors can walk out on a wooden pier over the salt, but the waivers that the gallery asks them to sign seem a little absurd without a body of water to fall into. Through Dec. 16. (White Box, 525 W. 26th St. 212-714-2347.)



Paul Rudnick's "Regrets Only," with Christine Baranski.

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

FRED SANDBACK
A minimalist of minor reputation, who died in 2003, at the age of fifty-nine, suddenly seems major. Two galleries present Sandback's environmental deployments of thin cords, usually in colored acrylic yarn, stretched between wall and floor or floor and ceiling. Exploiting our automatic tendency to read line (a form never seen in nature) as edge, the works describe planes of simple geometric shape. It feels pleasantly weird to walk through nonexistent partitions that your brain insists on deeming actual. Sandback fine-tunes the void of white-box art space with an austere elegance that makes his more famous colleagues Carl Andre and Dan Flavin seem supererogatorily baroque by comparison. Through Dec. 22. See Uptown for Zwirner & Wirth information. (Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070.)

Short List

MAUREEN GALLACE: 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121. Through Dec. 22. **JOANNE GREENBAUM:** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460. Through Dec. 23. **ELLSWORTH KELLY:** Marks, 523 W. 24th St., 522 W. 22nd St., and 526 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through Jan. 27. **ANDY WARHOL:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. and 522 W. 21st St. 212-741-1111. Through Dec. 22. **"POSTERS":** Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through Dec. 20.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

NINA KATCHADOURIAN
Katchadourian adapts the language of the sea, with a few modifications, to the city. A telescope mounted at the corner of Liberty and William Streets looks up to a seventeenth-floor office whose inhabitant (an anonymous lawyer recruited by the artist) rearranges banal objects to signal changing moods and existential status. Jars of tacks, potted plants, and other office paraphernalia take the place of colored semaphore flags, and are used to indicate things like "proceeding without incident," or that someone "require[s] a tug." (A translation key is attached to the telescope.) The idea of connecting the city's maritime history to its modern realms of office and street is wonderful, but the work feels limited, since communication, even on the waterways, is generally two-directional. Through Jan. 14. (One Chase Manhattan Plaza. For more information, see www.publicartfund.org.)

Short List

SLATER BRADLEY: Team, 83 Grand St. 212-279-9219. Through Dec. 23. **LEE FRIEDLANDER:** Borden, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-431-0166. Through Jan. 6.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
In Balanchine's "The Nutcracker," the valiant Marie flings her slipper at the Mouse King, and the snowflake maidens waltz in the wintry forest. Casts are available on the company's Web site a week in advance. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Dec. 13 at 2 and 6, Dec. 14 and Dec. 19 at 6, Dec. 15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 1 and 5. Through Dec. 30.)

TANZTHEATER WUPPERTAL PINA BAUSCH
"Nefés" (Turkish for "breath") is the German dance-theatre queen's tribute to Istanbul. The latest in a long series of city-inspired works, the three-hour spectacle is also the latest example of the choreographer's recent turn away from the psychopathological focus of her early career and toward a calmer, more whimsical tone. Intimate, sensual pleasure in movement floods the piece like the return of something long repressed. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Dec. 12 at 7 and Dec. 14-16 at 7:30.)

PARSONS DANCE
In two rotating programs at the Joyce, three New York premières reaffirm David Parsons's predilection for making inviting, vigorous dances. "Nascimento Novo" uses up-tempo pop music by the Brazilian icon Milton Nascimento but skips the samba in favor of high-energy modern dance. In the solo "One Long Move," a girl in a vertical-striped unitard explores isolations in a non-hip-hop context. Clothes are a dancer's foil in the fast-driving "Peel"; in a terse solo, a long-limbed, anxious beauty tears at her shirt but can't quite let it go. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Dec. 12-13 at 7:30, Dec. 14-15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 2 and 7:30.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE
In the third week of the City Center season, "Portrait of Billie," John Butler's 1959 biographical take on Billie Holiday, gets a restaging by Carmen de Lavallade, who played the jazz legend in the original production. Butler's Billie is a tragic heroine, mistreated by her man; her gardenia gets crushed. On Sunday, Renee Robinson celebrates twenty-five years with the company, dancing two of her greatest roles: the woman in de Lavallade's breakup ballet, "Sweet Bitter Love," and the high priestess in Ronald K. Brown's "Grace." (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.

Anthony Bourdain shunning tourists in Times Square

TIMES SQUARE. IN A FEW WEEKS… HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WILL PACK INTO THESE FIVE SQUARE BLOCKS. DRUNK, SCREAMING AND WEARING FUNNY HATS. AND EVERY ONE OF 'EM WILL HAVE A LIST OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

WHAT'S MY

RESOL

SIMPLE. NOT TO HAVE ANY. THIS YEAR… BE BOLD. KEEP TRAVELING, KEEP EATING EVERYTHING AND HAVING A REALLY GOOD TIME. THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING. I'M ANTHONY BOURDAIN. I WRITE. I EAT. I TRAVEL. AND I'M HUNGRY FOR MORE.

Travel channel

ANTHONY BOURDAIN: NO RESERVATIONS
NEW SEASO
MONDAY JAN Y M

WHERE ARE YOU GOING NEXT YEAR? TRAVELCHANNEL.COM/BOURDAIN

"Penny Smith" (1974), from a show of Lee Friedlander's vintage prints, at Borden.

Dec. 13-15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, Dec. 17 at 3 and 7:30, and Dec. 19 at 7. Through Dec. 31. For complete schedule, visit www.alvinailey.org.)

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS / ASHLEIGH LEITE
Two talented young choreographers present work developed through Dance New Amsterdam's artist-in-residence program. To his ongoing lives-of-the-saints compilation, "The Golden Legend," Williams introduces St. Sebastian and St. Pancras, with a return visit by St. Christopher—more marvels of live medieval music and erudition coupled with an original theatrical imagination. Leite, a protégée of Stephen Petronio, premières "Flawed," which was inspired by a woman with Tourette's syndrome. Represented directly, the spasms and tics aren't all that interesting, but when Leite channels the compulsive energy into a cogs-in-a-machine quartet for four women the intricate violence fascinates. (280 Broadway, at Chambers St. 212-279-4200. Dec. 14-16 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 3.)

HIJACK AND SCOTTY HERON
The Minneapolis-based duo who call themselves Hijack—Kristin Van Loon and Arwen Wilder—mean to be provocative, but with a dose of humor and Dadaist absurdity; their piece "Fetish," for example, was inspired, in part, by taxidermy. At P.S. 122, the two women join up with their sometime collaborator, the New Orleans native Scotty Heron, who has also been known to relish the absurd (he once danced in pointe shoes while balancing on a bucket), for an evening of solos, duets, and trios under the title "3 Minutes of Pork and Shoving." (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101. Dec. 14-15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 5 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 5.)

"WHO IS SARAH SAVELLI?" / "TAPPY HOLIDAYS"
The story in tap dancing today is one of abundant talent and insufficient opportunity. Instead of waiting for a job, Ayodele Casel and Sarah Savelli, two of the best hoofers around, have started a production company. For their first effort, on Friday, Savelli narrates and dances a wry backward glance at her ten years as a professional tap dancer. On Sunday, the two are joined by a cast of virtuosos and a live band as they tear into holiday classics. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-1414. Dec. 15 at 7:30 and Dec. 17 at 7.)

NEW YORK THEATRE BALLET
This admirable chamber company presents its simplified, hour-long "Nutcracker," designed for the enjoyment of children. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-307-4100. Dec. 16-17 at 11 A.M., 1, and 3:30.)

MONICA BILL BARNES
At a family-friendly matinée at the Joyce SoHo, Deborah Lohse supplies the kicky narration and Barnes performs the slightly zany postmodern solos in a revival of her 2003 piece "This Ain't No Rodeo!" (155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Dec. 16 at 2.)

JOFFREY BALLET SCHOOL'S "THE NUTCRACKER"
The young dancers-in-training present a two-hour, Victorian rendition of E. T. A. Hoffmann's tale by the school's director, John D. Magnus. In alternating casts, Clara is danced by two senior students, while the Polichinelles and angels are performed by adorable beginners, with steps tailor-made to showcase their abilities. (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-279-4200. Dec. 16 at 2 and 7.)

LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO
Léonide Massine's "Gaîté Parisienne" and Jerome Robbins's "The Cage" are the latest classics to get saucy reinterpretations by the all-male Trocks, who dance in drag and giant toe shoes. But the thirty-two-year-old troupe has more than inappropriate chest hair and camp on its side. Illuminating flashes of style and wit, along with some unexpectedly lovely steps, provide texture along with the belly laughs. Two alternating programs stocked with repertory favorites include the company's fractured versions of "Swan Lake" (Act II), "Les Sylphides," and "The Dying Swan." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Dec. 19 at 7:30. Through Jan. 7.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
All that glitters is not Gelb, as the latest revival of **"La Bohème"** proves. Franco Zeffirelli's grandiose production—the epitome of Met values, circa 1981—hardly allows for intimacy, but it can't be reproached for want of voluptuous scenery, vivacity, or charm. With Maija Kovalevska, Rolando Villazón, Anna Samuil, and Peter Coleman-Wright; Steven Crawford conducts. (Dec. 13 and Dec. 16 at 8.) ♦ Verdi's magnificent **"Don Carlo,"** with Patricia Racette, Olga Borodina, Johan Botha, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, René Pape (a commanding King Philip), and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (Dec. 14 and Dec. 18 at 7.) ♦ Julie Taymor's physically exuberant, if intellectually scattered, production of Mozart's **"Die Zauberflöte"** is nothing if not entertaining. It returns for the holidays in performances of both the full German version (such as this one) and an abridged English-language version ideal for families and opera newbies. The winning cast features Isabel Bayrakdarian, Cornelia Götz, Christoph Strehl (like Götz, making his début), and Nathan Gunn; Levine. (Dec. 15 at 8.) ♦ The much anticipated début of Joseph Calleja as the Duke in **"Rigoletto"** revealed a still growing singer who possesses a lyric tenor of ravishing beauty; his love interest, Gilda, is sung by the soprano Ekaterina Siurina, another recent débutante, whose technical perfection more than makes up for her sometimes timid expressivity. Nancy Fabiola Herrera, Carlos Alvarez, and Robert Lloyd (in the roles of Maddalena, Rigoletto, and Sparafucile, respectively) all know their way around Verdi's sturdiest warhorse; Friedrich Haider. (Dec. 16 at 1:30.) ♦ With Kate Aldrich and Piotr Beczala replacing Herrera and Calleja. (Dec. 19 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

"DON JUAN IN PRAGUE"
Mozart's "Don Giovanni" gets the multimedia BAM treatment courtesy of the director David Chambers, who has conceived a radical staging of the opera, set in the city where it premièred, in 1787. The cast is led by the avant-garde singing actress Iva Bittová (in the role of Donna Elvira), accompanied by the sound design of Matthew Suttor, the playing of the Agon Orchestra of Prague (conducted by Peter Kofron), and images from the photographic work of Jan Saudek and Robert Polidori. (BAM Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Dec. 13-16 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"
The world's favorite Christmas piece is always well served in Manhattan; the annual flurry of performances begins this week. Dec. 12 and Dec. 14 at 7:30: The St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, in residence at the city's grandest Episcopal church, is the purists' favorite, offering a tasteful and expert performance in the Anglican tradition. The venerable John Scott conducts. (Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. For tickets, visit www.saintthomaschurch.org.) ♦ Dec. 18 at 8: The Oratorio Society of New York gathers for its hundred-and-thirty-third annual performance of "Messiah" at Carnegie Hall—the auditorium that was built to house the Society's concerts. The appealing vocal soloists are Julianne Baird, Sasha Cooke, Scott Murphree, and Philip Cutlip; Kent Tritle. (212-247-7800.) ♦ Dec. 19 at 8: For almost forty years, the populist choice has been the "Messiah Sing-In," in which the audience gets to sing the big choruses along with the National Chorale, conducted by Martin Josman, Johannes Somary, and others. (Avery Fisher Hall. For information about tickets, or to buy a score, call 212-333-5333.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Kaija Saariaho, a favorite composer of the Philharmonic, writes music in which emotional complexity, technical finesse, and luminous sound combine. David Robertson conducts the orchestra in the American première of "Adriana Songs" (a suite from her opera "Adriana Mater"), with the soprano Patricia Bardon; the program also includes works by Sibelius ("Night Ride and Sunrise") and Debussy ("La Mer"). (Dec. 14 at 7:30 and Dec. 15-16 at 8.) ♦ Note: The orchestra will give a preview performance on one of its "Hear & Now" concerts, in which Saariaho will discuss her music with Steven Stucky before a complete performance of the work, led by Robertson. (Dec. 13 at 6:45.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
There are few Christmas pleasures in New York more memorable than taking in a concert amid the majestic intimacy of the Metropolitan Museum's Medieval Sculpture Hall. The conductorless ensemble is the next attraction there, performing a pair of Bach cantatas (Nos. 40 and 133) with a group of guest singers that includes the soprano Ena Freeman, the tenor Marc Molomot, and the baritone Richard Lalli. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Dec. 14 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S
The Scottish maestro Donald Runnicles, a conductor with dramatic flair, leads a mostly British program featuring Pärt's "Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten," Britten's Violin Concerto (with Midori), and Elgar's "Enigma Variations." (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 14 at 8.)

WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ORCHESTRA
This orchestra is the brainchild of Daniel Barenboim and the late Edward Said, who imagined an ensemble that would allow young Israeli and Arab musicians to create a dialogue by playing great music together. The group has since ripened into a professional-rank ensemble as notable for its performances as for its idealistic message; Barenboim conducts it next at Carnegie Hall, in works by Beethoven (the "Leonore" Overture No. 3), Mozart, and Brahms (the First Symphony). (212-247-7800. Dec. 19 at 8.)

RECITALS

KALICHSTEIN-LAREDO-ROBINSON TRIO
Edward Steuermann's rarely heard arrangement of Schoenberg's "Transfigured Night" is the centerpiece of the estimable piano trio's latest concert at the 92nd Street Y, surrounded by works by W. F. Bach and Brahms (the Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major, with the violist Michael Tree). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Dec. 12-13 at 8.)

STEVEN ISSERLIS AND FRIENDS
The British cellist and some celebrated colleagues—including the violinist Joshua Bell and the violist Paul Neubauer—explore the music of Schumann and Brahms in two programs at Zankel Hall. (212-247-7800. Dec. 13-14 at 7:30. For details, see www.carnegiehall.org.)

BARGEMUSIC
Dec. 14-15 at 7:30: Olga Vinokur has the floating chamber-music series's stage to herself to offer solo piano works by Beethoven (the Sonata No. 10 in G Major), Chopin (the Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor), Medtner, Prokofiev ("Sarcasms"), and Rachmaninoff. ♦ Dec. 16 at 7:30 and Dec. 17 at 4: The cellist Eric Jacobsen, the clarinettist Julien Bliss, and the pianist Jules Quentin team up to perform Brahms's moody Clarinet Trio on a program that also features music by Bloch, Berg, and Bernstein. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

THE KITCHEN: IKUE MORI
The laptop sound artist, admired for her richly layered improvisations combining music and video, offers a new work inspired by Balinese ceiling paintings in a concert that also includes a collaboration with the electro-acoustic harpist Zeena Parkins and a solo set by the vocalist Maja Ratkje. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Dec. 14-15 at 8.)

GUARNERI STRING QUARTET
The veteran American foursome digs into quartets by Haydn, Janáček (No. 1, "The Kreutzer Sonata"),

and Beethoven (in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Dec. 16 at 8.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES: THE BALTIMORE CONSORT
Early music from both the art and folk traditions is the specialty of this admired group, who come to Corpus Christi Church to offer "Noël Nouvelet!," a hearty program of Christmas music for voices and instruments. (529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Dec. 17 at 4.)

MET CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
The singers Susan Narucki, Kate Lindsey, and Tamara Mumford are the guests of James Levine's formidable group in a concert featuring Carter's "Tempo e Tempi," Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds, and the New York première of the ensemble version of John Harbison's "Motetti di Montale." (212-247-7800. Dec. 17 at 5.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: THE BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS
The Society's two-week Baroque binge culminates in its annual performance of all of Bach's ebullient masterworks, with an ensemble featuring such musicians as the violinist Ida Kavafian, the cellist David Finckel, and the hornist Stewart Rose. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Dec. 17 at 5 and Dec. 19 at 7:30. For a complete list of concerts, see www.chambermusicsociety.org.)

MOVIES OPENING

DREAMGIRLS
The film version of the 1981 Broadway musical, about a sixties pop trio (Beyoncé Knowles, Jennifer Hudson, and Anika Noni Rose) and their manager (Jamie Foxx). Co-starring Eddie Murphy. Directed by Bill Condon. Opening Dec. 15. (In wide release.)

ERAGON
Stefen Fangmeier directed this fantasy, based on a novel by Christopher Paolini, about the relationship between a boy (Edward Speleers) and a she-dragon. Co-starring Jeremy Irons and John Malkovich. Opening Dec. 15. (In wide release.)

THE GOOD GERMAN
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Dec. 15. (In wide release.)

HOME OF THE BRAVE
Irwin Winkler directed this drama, starring Samuel L. Jackson, Christina Ricci, and 50 Cent, about a soldier who returns home from Iraq. Opening Dec. 15. (Lincoln Square.)

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
Gabriele Muccino directed this drama, about a single father (Will Smith) and his young son (played by Jaden Smith, the actor's son). Opening Dec. 15. (In wide release.)

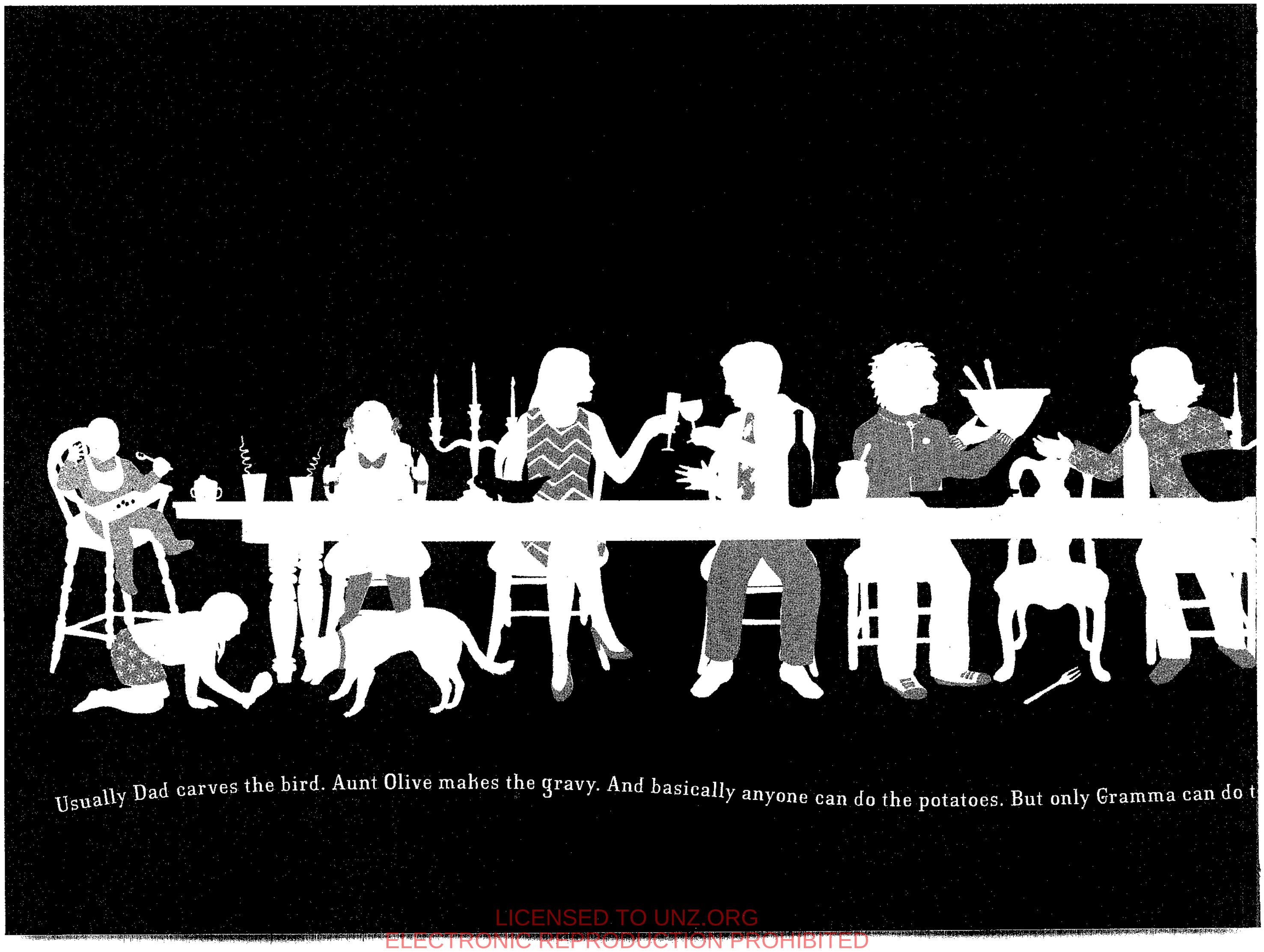
THE SECRET LIFE OF WORDS
Isabel Coixet directed this drama, about an introverted woman (Sarah Polley) who tends to a burn victim on an oil rig. Opening Dec. 15. (Quad Cinema.)

NOW PLAYING

APOCALYPTO
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

BABEL
Alejandro González Iñárritu creates savagely beautiful and heartbreaking images, he gets fearless performances out of his actors, he edits with the sharpest razor inside any computer in Hollywood, and he also abuses his audience with a humorless fatalism and a piling up of calamities that border on the ludicrous. "Babel" is set in Morocco, Tokyo, and both Southern California and northern Mexico. The movie has three stories—all touching on relationships between parents and children—which have been arbitrarily linked together by the will of the director and his collaborator, the screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga. Their theme is the pathos of ignorance. All over the world, terrible things are happening, and we cannot know them or feel them, but an eagle-eyed artist, as he spans the globe, can connect us. As a mood, this globalized empathy is a noble enterprise. As a method of constructing a movie, it's hopeless.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/30/06.) (In wide release.)

BLOOD DIAMOND
A rousing, old-fashioned romantic adventure tale set against the civil war in Sierra Leone in 1999. Djimon Hounsou is a fisherman whose young son is abducted by the thuggish Revolutionary United Front and turned into a killer. Hounsou, forced by the R.U.F. to work in the diamond fields, finds and hides a very big stone. Leonardo DiCaprio, looking and sounding tougher than in the past, is a cynical diamond smuggler who wants to get hold of it, and Jennifer Connelly, flirtatious and avid for once, is a danger-junkie magazine reporter who cozies up to DiCaprio in order to find out how diamonds are smuggled out of the country and sold to Europeans for arms money that fuels the endless war. These three take turns using, helping, and half-trusting one another as young killers rampage through the country firing AK-47s from the backs of pickup trucks. The director, Edward Zwick, stays poised on the edge of popular romance, and that turns out to be a good place to be; he does serious work there, pulling back from the obvious and digging deeper into Africa's troubles. Written by Charles Leavitt, from an idea that he developed with C. Gaby Mitchell.—*D.D.* (12/11/06) (In wide release.)


Usually Dad carves the bird. Aunt Olive makes the gravy. And basically anyone can do the potatoes. But only Gramma can do t

BOBBY

In Emilio Estevez's film, Senator Robert F. Kennedy is seen in newsreels and occasionally from the rear as a figure moving through the old Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on the night of his assassination, June 4, 1968. Yet "Bobby" is devoted not to him but to such things as the marital difficulties of the hotel's hair stylist (Sharon Stone) and manager (William H. Macy), the soft meanderings of two retired gents in the lobby (Anthony Hopkins and Harry Belafonte), the psychedelic misadventures of a pair of truant campaign workers (Brian Geraghty and Shia LaBeouf), and many other little tales, starring Demi Moore, Estevez himself, Christian Slater, Heather Graham, Martin Sheen, Helen Hunt, Elijah Wood, and several others. The intersecting stories are meant to suggest the range of American character types, from base to noble, and also the conflicting feelings of vanity, fear, and idealism that Bobby Kennedy might have reconciled and harmonized in a Presidential campaign. But Estevez's script never rises above earnest banality. And didn't anyone suggest to him that you can't throw a movie-celebrity party about an assassination?—*D.D.* (11/27/06) (In wide release.)

BORAT

Somewhere inside the sound and fury that have shrouded this project is a short, gross, and very funny series of sketches, lightly knotted together into a modern picaresque. Sacha Baron Cohen, the British performer behind Ali G, brings his yet more notorious invention, the Kazakh journalist Borat Sagdiyev, to the United States, where his shameless curiosity, not to mention a reckless indifference to political correctness, is designed to cause maximum offense. The plot, if you can call it that, demands that Borat travel across the country to find Pamela Anderson: a noble quest, even if it does mean putting that distinguished actress in a sack. Some of the time, our hero is accompanied by his manager, Azamat (Ken Davitian), and also by a live bear, although Azamat looks more like a bear than the bear does. There are jokes thrown at Jews, African-Americans, rodeo fans, homosexuals, and, for good measure, the rest of the population. The smart explanation for this is that Baron Cohen, who is Jewish himself, is assaulting intolerance wherever he finds it; what he cannot control is the fate of the film itself, and one wonders whether, to a late-night college audience, say, the irony behind Borat would be of much concern. Could the movie become a safety valve, encouraging its fans to let off steam?—*Anthony Lane* (11/6/06) (In wide release.)

CASINO ROYALE

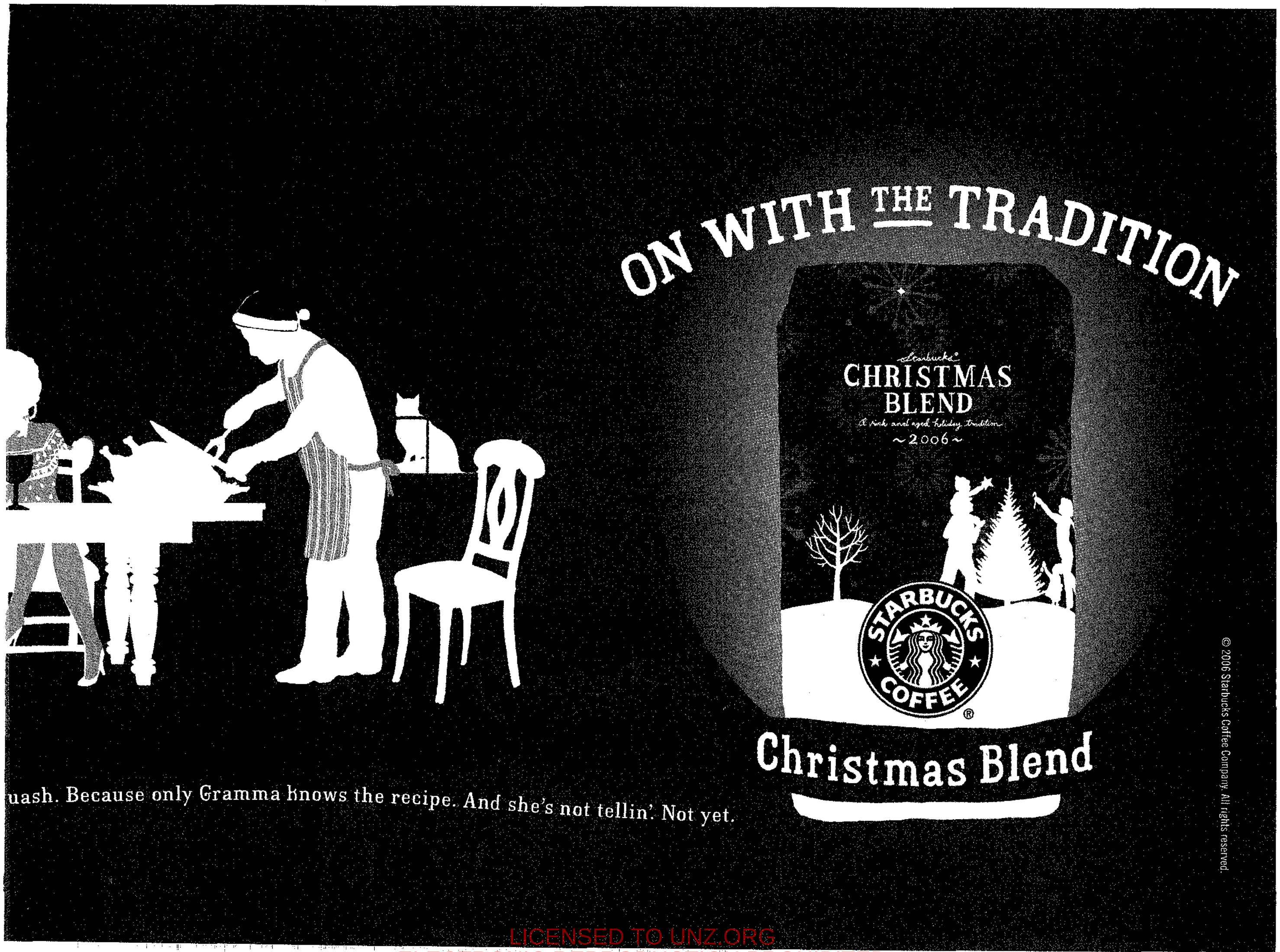
James Bond returns in a new incarnation. Much of the debate that preceded this twenty-first installment of 007 revolved around the appointment of Daniel Craig to the leading role; a more pressing question was whether the ailing Bond franchise itself deserved to survive. The solution, as controlled by the director Martin Campbell, is to put the narrative on a low-carb diet: no fatty subplots, no indigestible villains, a minimum of frills. Our hero is pure protein, frequently bloodied, and the movie is rich in tenderizing violence; the torture scene, lifted grimly from Ian Fleming's novel, is unfit for younger viewers. The plot requires Bond to outwit Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen), a banker to the world's terrorists; given the film's paucity of gadgets, 007 must rely on his gambling skills, his fists, and the comforting presence of Vesper Lynd (Eva Green), who introduces herself with the words "I'm the money." The movie is ominously long, but, for the first time in many years, we are steered away from silliness and toward Fleming's vision of a bitter and undependable world. With Judi Dench as M.—*A.L.* (11/20/06) (In wide release.)

DÉJÀ VU

In this new thriller directed by Tony Scott and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer—a veteran pair of pyromaniacs if there ever was one—five hundred and forty-three men, women, and children board a New Orleans ferry and are promptly blown sky-high by a terrorist. Scott then makes pretty pictures out of the flaming bodies shooting through the air and falling into the water. This bit of senseless exploitation, it turns out, is a tease. Denzel Washington, playing an ace A.T.F. agent, gets sent by a fabulous time machine to a period four days earlier so that he can try to prevent the deaths of the passengers and a beautiful young woman (Paula Patton). Scott directs the intricate science-fiction action with unusual precision but cuts each episode like crazy. The result is a jumpy, well-engineered nonsensical entertainment. With Jim Caviezel as a fanatical anti-government killer. Written by Bill Marsilii and Terry Rossio.—*D.D.* (12/11/06) (In wide release.)

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Movies about movies are as old as the movies; Christopher Guest, who has already made a movie about the compromises to which filmmakers submit ("The Big Picture," from 1989), now returns to the fray. His new farce stars Catherine O'Hara as the leading lady in a cheap family drama entitled "Home for Purim"—too shabby and antiquated, frankly, to be credible. She hears a whisper of an Oscar nomination and sets about cranking up the buzz; the same goes for her co-stars, played by Harry Shearer and Parker Posey. Guest himself takes the role of the director, and brings along his usual repertory players, including Bob Balaban, Michael McKean, Eugene Levy, and John Michael Higgins. They are as welcome as ever—so is Fred Willard, playing the host of a Hollywood-crazed TV show—but, by the standards of this group's previous projects, such as "Best in Show" and Rob Reiner's "This Is Spinal Tap," the result feels both tame and unsubtle. Only O'Hara finds pathos amid the delusions of the trade; the sight of her, surgically enhanced


ON WITH THE TRADITION
Starbucks
CHRISTMAS BLEND
A rich and aged holiday tradition
~2006~
STARBUCKS COFFEE ®
Christmas Blend
uash. Because only Gramma knows the recipe. And she's not tellin'. Not yet.

© 2006 Starbucks Coffee Company. All rights reserved.

ADVERTISEMENT

Profiles in
Commerce

THE STORIES BEHIND SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ADS IN *THE NEW YORKER*

Warm Things

Richard Smith-Allen always knew that he was going to own his own business—he just didn't know what kind.

After earning a business degree, he took a job with a maker of down sleeping bags. Quickly learning the business, he set aside half of his income until he had $2,500. With an additional $2,500 loan from his mom, Warm Things was born in his Berkeley home. His wife, Sharon, joined him within six months, insuring their success.

Thirty-two years later, Warm Things continues to thrive. High quality and great value keep customers coming back. The product line has grown to include down comforters, covers, feather beds, robes, slippers, bed jackets, vests, throws, pillows, and sheets.

A familiar brand, known to a generation of *New Yorker* readers, Warm Things today also has four retail stores in the Bay Area.

**For more information,
visit warmthingsonline.com
or call 415.472.2154**

and squeezed into a minidress, is almost too much to bear. She deserves some sort of award.—*A.L.* (12/4/06) (In wide release.)

THE FOUNTAIN

Darren Aronofsky's new film, his first since "Requiem for a Dream," stars Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz in three interwoven roles. In the world of today, he is a research scientist and she is his dying wife. In the sixteenth century, he is a conquistador in the jungles of Central America and she is the queen who sends him there. In the distant future, he is a space traveller and she is his saintly muse, floating together through the void in a lovely bubble. One knows how they feel. The link between these tales appears to be a tree, the life-giving properties of which have turned it into a grail for those in search of eternity. Viewers who like to construe "2001: A Space Odyssey" as a serious philosophical statement should have no problem with Aronofsky's movie, whereas more skeptical souls will treat it as a finely acted, beautifully shot compendium of nonsense—well-meaning, if any actual meaning can be discerned. With Ellen Burstyn, as elegantly persuasive as ever, in the role of the scientist's boss.—*A.L.* (12/4/06) (In wide release.)

HAPPY FEET

This exuberant animated film, directed like a musical Biblical epic by George Miller, concerns a misfit penguin, Mumble (voiced by Elijah Wood), whose gift for tap dancing (extraordinarily motion-captured from Savion Glover's footwork) is seen as somewhat un-penguin by members of his all-singing tribe. When their fish supply dwindles, Mumble is blamed and forced to leave the flock, but his wanderings eventually lead him to discover the true nature of the problem. Along the way, many inconvenient truths are addressed, and the film's surprising political resonance gives it an independent, risk-taking tone. Yet it's all gently handled, and the quasi-gospel musical numbers (including a strikingly beautiful take on the Queen tune "Somebody to Love") and the soaring, lovely animation combine to make pop entertainment at its best.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

THE HISTORY BOYS

This adaptation of Alan Bennett's effervescent play comes alive on the screen. The setting is Yorkshire in the nineteen-eighties—a grammar school at which a group of eight boys, seven of them very bright, are being prepped for mind-crushing exams that could lead to a place to read history at Oxford or Cambridge. No actual classrooms could ever have been as animated as these: the boys talk back to their teachers, and everyone seems familiar with the details of everyone else's private life. Bennett's conceit is that the classroom is a theatre in which learning is acquired as much by performance as by study. There, wit is a form of action, and music and poetry create and release emotions too private to be spoken. The two principal teachers are Hector (Richard Griffiths), a sixtyish humanist who believes in educating souls, and his antagonist, Irwin (Stephen Campbell Moore), a slick new man, who teaches clever exam-taking skills. With Dominic Cooper as Dakin, the cunning, dark-eyed seducer, and Samuel Barnett as the smooth-cheeked Posner, physically younger than the other boys and hopelessly in love with Dakin. Posner sings Rodgers and Hart ballads; he's like a Shakespearean boy actor offering plaintive Elizabethan ballads in the interludes between action.—*D.D.* (11/27/06) (In wide release.)

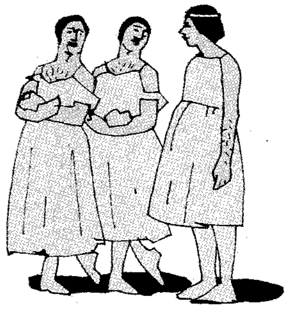
ILLIBATEZZA (PURITY)

Roberto Rossellini's strange satirical featurette, from 1962, is a barbed reproach to the generation of cinephiles who made his reputation. Though its ostensible subject is erotic obsession, its action turns on what Rossellini sees as a pathological fixation on movies. Joe (Bruce Balaban), an American executive who promotes television in Third World countries, becomes fixated on Anna Maria (Rosanna Schiaffino), an Italian stewardess who serves him on a flight to Bangkok. Meeting her by chance at his hotel, he pursues her relentlessly and harasses her mercilessly—bringing along his camera as she makes home movies of herself and her travels to send home to Carlo, her fiancé in Italy. Carlo shows Anna Maria's footage of Joe to a psychoanalyst, who diagnoses the American as being a "psychopath with an Oedipus complex" and advises Carlo on how she can dissuade him. Joe, for his part, tries to claw his way into the wall on

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BURNING BUSH

There is much about ballet that is extreme and improbable, and locating the comedy in that is the specialty of the Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, or the Trocks, as this all-male travesty troupe is fondly called. The featured item in the company's new season, which opens next Tuesday at the Joyce, is extreme indeed: a sendup of Jerome Robbins's "The Cage" (1951), which showed a pack of frightening female creatures disposing of two luckless men who wander into their territory. Robbins's ballet, so exuberantly misogynistic—the women's costumes sport a great snarl of black embroidery rising from the crotch—has been ripe for parody since its première, and now someone has stepped forward: Robert La Fosse. His version is called "La Cage." "What I tried to do," he says, "was show off the company's technique. In the seventies, they could barely get up on pointe. Now they do triple fouettés." He warns, though, that what we see may not be precisely what he created in the studio: "Sometimes the Trocks like to walk across the stage eating a chicken bone, and there's nothing I can do about that."

—*Joan Acocella*



which he projects his own images of Anna Maria, madly watching them unfurl on his white shirt. In effect, this artistic poison-pen letter is Rossellini's self-lacerating farewell to fiction; the despair it evokes proved incurable. In Italian and English.—*Richard Brody* (MOMA; Dec. 16 and Dec. 19.)

INLAND EMPIRE
David Lynch's three-hour head trip, made over a two-year span on charmingly low-definition video, was crafted as lovingly—and as obliviously—as a home movie. The central story concerns an actress (Laura Dern) who has been out of work and in gilded isolation with her tyrannical Polish husband (Peter J. Lucas); when she gets a starring role in a major movie, she finds her identity merging with that of the character, an adulterous wife. When Lynch sticks with his straightforward view of how things are done in Hollywood, the film briefly comes alive as a trenchant, nuanced report from the front. But he also shoehorns in lugubrious scenes from Poland, a sitcom apartment inhabited by people wearing rabbit heads, grotesque character actors, saccharine pop music, grindhouse camp, horror clichés, gratuitous gore, chipmunk voices, jejune sex play, and mystical hokum, and jumbles the strands together in a pretentious puzzle. The resulting grab bag of Lynchian motifs and methods quickly devolves into self-parody. Dern gives a virtuoso performance, albeit in an overwrought, numbing void.—*R.B.* (IFC Center.)

THE PINK PANTHER
The first in the series of Blake Edwards comedies featuring Peter Sellers's maladroit Inspector Clouseau has a surprisingly cosmopolitan blend of caper, cuckoldry, and pratfalls. Both Sir Charles Lytton (David Niven)—who is also the notorious jewel thief the Phantom—and Lytton's con-artist nephew (Robert Wagner) woo Clouseau's wife (Capucine) while the inspector is trying to prevent the theft of the fabulous Pink Panther diamond; by the end, even the gem's owner, the exotic Princess Dala (Claudia Cardinale), is conspiring against him. Clouseau, however, proves clumsy and unsinkable. With his stilted, intensely self-important bearing, he's an almost archetypal character—the man of injured dignity who won't admit his injury. The movie provides a pleasant, snowy dream of the high life, but its best moments are Clouseau's, as he wags a finger that lands in someone else's nose or cools off a burned hand by stuffing it in a friend's stein of beer. Released in 1963.—*Michael Sragow* (MOMA; Dec. 15.)

THE QUEEN
The new Stephen Frears film considers the deadlock, both grieving and comical, that followed the death of the Princess of Wales, in 1997. On the one hand, the Queen (Helen Mirren), believing it to be a private matter, stays and broods in Scotland with the Duke of Edinburgh (James Cromwell) and Prince Charles (Alex Jennings). On the other hand, Tony Blair (Michael Sheen), sensing a thirst for public mourning and thus a unique political opportunity, urges Her Majesty to return to London and face down the mob. And so she does; the crux of the drama comes when Mirren turns to the crowd outside Buckingham Palace and, with one smile, quashes any prospect of rebellion. The script, by Peter Morgan, relies largely on well-grounded speculation, and sticklers for accuracy will find the whole thing straying beyond belief; but, thanks to the careful performances, you subscribe all too readily to the movie's suggestion of a divided land—of a Britain caught between the trustworthy stiffness of tradition and a liberalism that is open not just to emotional honesty but to the coarseness of modern excess. With Helen McCrory as a distinctly unceremonious Cherie Blair.—*A.L.* (10/9/06) (In wide release.)

STRANGER THAN FICTION
The existence of Harold Crick (Will Ferrell) is of no interest, even to Harold Crick. He works for the Internal Revenue Service, never takes vacations, and always cleans his teeth with the same number of brushstrokes. His life is described to us, in crisp female voice-over; little by little, we realize that Harold himself is listening to the voice, and that he is something even worse than dull. He is fictional, the character in a novel, and the narrator is in fact his creator, Karen Eiffel (Emma Thompson), who is trying to find a way to kill him off. Moviegoers already exhausted by "Being John Malkovich" and "Adaptation" may wince at such a conceit, but the screenwriter, Zach Helm, and the director, Marc Forster, pull it off—they actually work through the comic implications of the setup, including the idea that it may not turn out funny after all. (Harold is devastated when he reads the manuscript of his story and understands that, in the name of art, he must indeed expire.) Dustin Hoffman is in relaxed and winning form as the literature professor to whom the hero takes his problem, and Maggie Gyllenhaal is the free spirit who thaws his iced-up heart. The ending may be mush, but the rest of Forster's movie has surprising bite.—*A.L.* (In wide release.)

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

VOLVER
The new film from Pedro Almodóvar stars Penélope Cruz as Raimunda, who is soon seen mopping up the blood of her murdered husband—slain by her daughter, whom he tried to abuse—and stashing him in a freezer. This being Almodóvar, such horrors have a jaunty edge, and the colors (red gore against blue floor) are picked out with an unembarrassed eye. The story is more or less a male-free zone, and any other director would be chastised for training his camera so devotedly on a succession of cleavages. We follow Raimunda's timid sister (Lola Dueñas) as she mourns her aunt (Chus Lampreave) and then takes up, quite happily, with the ghost of her dead mother (Carmen Maura). Misfortune has befallen every generation, yet the victims are more resigned than surprised, as if, like the cheery local hooker (María Isabel Díaz), they know all men are traitors to begin with. Hitchcockians will warm to the credit sequence, which could be by Saul Bass, and to the score, which shimmers with echoes of Bernard Herrmann; even Hitchcock, however, might have balked at the level of emotional control that Almodóvar exerts upon his characters. You feel yourself gripped by a beautiful machine, engineered for the finest melodrama. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (11/6/06) (In wide release.)

THE YELLOW TICKET
Raoul Walsh's peculiarly timely 1931 drama, set in the days leading up to the First World War, concerns the Russian government's persecution of minorities, the deployment of the secret police to suppress dissent, and attempts to eliminate foreign journalists who publicize its despotic methods. Marya Kalish (Elissa Landi), a young woman from the terrorized Jewish community of Kiev, seeks to visit her father in St. Petersburg, where he is a political prisoner. Because Jews are barred from leaving the Pale of Settlement, she bribes a madam for a prostitute's "yellow ticket," which guarantees passage but subjects her to the law's scrutiny and society's disdain. After meeting a British reporter, Julian Rolfe (Laurence Olivier), aboard a train, Marya becomes his secretary and his source for fiery dispatches about the Russian people's subjection. The chief of police, Baron Igor Andreyev (Lionel Barrymore), an unctuous sybarite who savors his cruelty along with his comforts, tries to silence Rolfe by pressuring Marya. As Jules Furthman's script makes painfully clear, things can't turn out well for the Russian dissident and the foreign critic except through the sudden intervention of the chaos of war. The story is strikingly self-sufficient: few directorial flourishes were needed to bring it to life.—*R.B.* (Film Forum; Dec. 14.)

Also Playing

DECK THE HALLS: In wide release. **THE HOLIDAY:** In wide release. **THE NATIVITY STORY:** In wide release. **TURISTAS:** In wide release. **UNACCOMPANIED MINORS:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"Audio Vérité." Dec. 13 at 8: "The Hobart Variations," sonic variants on "Rose Hobart" (1936, Joseph Cornell). ♦ "Essential Cinema." Dec. 15 at 7:30: Short films by Joseph Cornell, including "Rose Hobart" (1936). ♦ Dec. 16 at 5: "Zvenigora" (1928, Alexander Dovzhenko; silent). ♦ Dec. 16 at 7:30: Short films by Cor-

ADVERTISEMENT

bookmarks

The *New Yorker* Promotion
Department invites you
to look for this release.

"MOMMY?"
ART BY MAURICE SENDAK
SCENARIO BY ARTHUR YORINKS
PAPER ENGINEERING BY
MATTHEW REINHART

NO. 1 NEW YORK *TIMES*
BEST-SELLER!

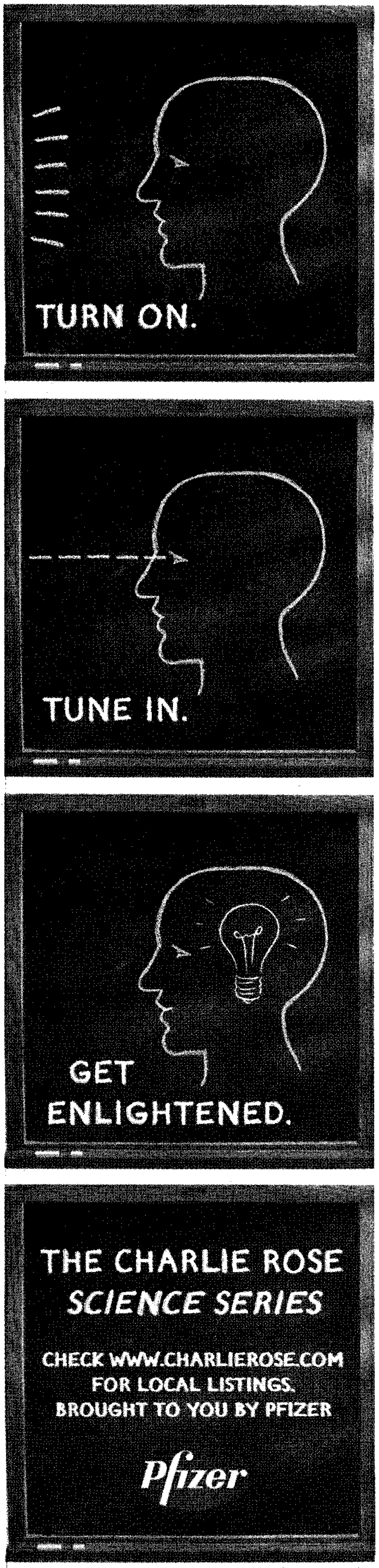
A NEW YORK *TIMES* BEST
ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF 2006!

"If you're going to buy only one
children's book of any kind
this year, make it *Mommy?*"
—*Chicago Sun-Times*

★ "The combined talent of
Sendak, Yorinks, and Reinhart
offers some of the best art
and artistry in the genre."
—*Kirkus Reviews*,
starred review

MICHAEL DI CAPUA BOOKS
SCHOLASTIC

SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks
and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.


TURN ON.
TUNE IN.
GET ENLIGHTENED.
THE CHARLIE ROSE SCIENCE SERIES
CHECK WWW.CHARLIEROSE.COM FOR LOCAL LISTINGS.
BROUGHT TO YOU BY PFIZER
Pfizer

© 2006 Pfizer Inc. Printed in USA

nell. ♦ Dec. 17 at 5: "Arsenal" (1928-29, Dovzhenko; silent). ♦ Dec. 17 at 7: "Earth" (1929-30, Dovzhenko; silent).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—In revival. Dec. 13-19 (call for showtimes): "The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser" (1974, Werner Herzog; in German).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through Dec. 21: "Fox Before the Code." Dec. 13 at 2:45, 6:05, and 9:25 and Dec. 14 at 2:45: "My Weakness" (1933, David Butler). ♦ Dec. 14 at 6:30: "The Trial of Vivienne Ware" (1932, William K. Howard). ♦ Dec. 14 at 7:45: "The Yellow Ticket" (†). ♦ Dec. 15 at 1:20, 4:25, and 9: "Looking for Trouble" (1934, William Wellman). ♦ Dec. 15 at 2:55 and 6: "The Painted Woman" (1932, John Blystone). ♦ Dec. 15 at 7:30: "Quick Millions" (1931, Rowland Brown). ♦ Dec. 16 at 1:20, 5:15, and 9:15: "Liliom" (1934, Fritz Lang; in French). ♦ Dec. 16 at 3:30 and 7:30: "Zoo in Budapest" (1933, Rowland V. Lee). ♦ Dec. 17 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "The Worst Woman in Paris?" (1933, Monta Bell). ♦ Dec. 17 at 3 and 6:30: "Week Ends Only" (1932, Alan Crosland). ♦ Dec. 19 at 8: "Nada Más Que una Mujer" (1934, Harry Lachman; in Spanish). ♦ In revival. Dec. 13-14 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Two or Three Things I Know About Her" (1966, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). ♦ Dec. 15-19 at 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Jules and Jim" (1961, François Truffaut; in French).

IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. Dec. 13-19 (call for showtimes): "El Topo" (1970, Alejandro Jodorowsky; in Spanish). ♦ Dec. 15-17 at noon: "Cria Cuervos" (1978, Carlos Saura; in Spanish). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Dec. 15-16: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (1992, Fran Rubel Kuzui).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through Dec. 22: The films of Roberto Rossellini. Except where noted, all films are in Italian. Dec. 13 at 3: "Socrates" (1970). ♦ Dec. 13 at 6: "It Was Night in Rome" (1960). ♦ Dec. 13 at 8:15: "General Della Rovere" (1959). ♦ Dec. 14 at 6 and Dec. 16 at 1: "The Rise of Louis XIV" (1966; in French). The Dec. 14 screening will be introduced by Isabella Rossellini. ♦ Dec. 15 at 1: "Acts of the Apostles" (1968; in English). ♦ Dec. 16 at 8:30 and Dec. 19 at 7:30: Short films by and about Rossellini, including "Illibatezza" ("Purity") (†). ♦ Dec. 19 at 5: "Vanina Vanini" (1961). ♦ In revival. Dec. 14 at 4 and Dec. 18 at 2: "Brute Force" (1947, Jules Dassin). ♦ Through Dec. 29: The Films of Thomas H. Ince. All films are silent. Dec. 14 at 6: Program 1. ♦ Dec. 14 at 8: Program 2. ♦ "Prix Jean Vigo." Dec. 14 at 8: "Mooncalf" (1998, Claude Mouriéras; in French). ♦ Through Dec. 30: The films of Paolo Virzi. All films are in Italian. Dec. 15 at 6: "August Vacation" (1996). ♦ Dec. 15 at 8:15 and Dec. 16 at 6:30: "Living It Up" (1994). ♦ Dec. 17 at 1:30: "Caterina in the Big City" (2003). Through Dec. 31: Films produced by Walter Mirisch. Dec. 15 at 6:15: "The Pink Panther" (†). ♦ Dec. 15 at 8:30: "The Party" (1968, Blake Edwards). ♦ Dec. 18 at 6: "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Billy Wilder). ♦ Dec. 18 at 8:30: "The Apartment" (1960, Wilder).

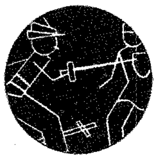
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—The films of Alejandro González Iñárritu. Dec. 15 at 7:30: "21 Grams" (2003). ♦ Through Dec. 31: The films of Jacques Rivette. All films are in French. Dec. 16 at 3: "Merry-Go-Round" (1983). ♦ Dec. 16 at 6: "Divertimento" (1991). ♦ Dec. 17 at 2: "Out 1: Spectre" (1973). ♦ Dec. 17 at 7: "The Gang of Four" (1989).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." Dec. 15-16: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (1989, Jeremiah S. Chechik).

DVD NOTES
THE WAR AT HOME



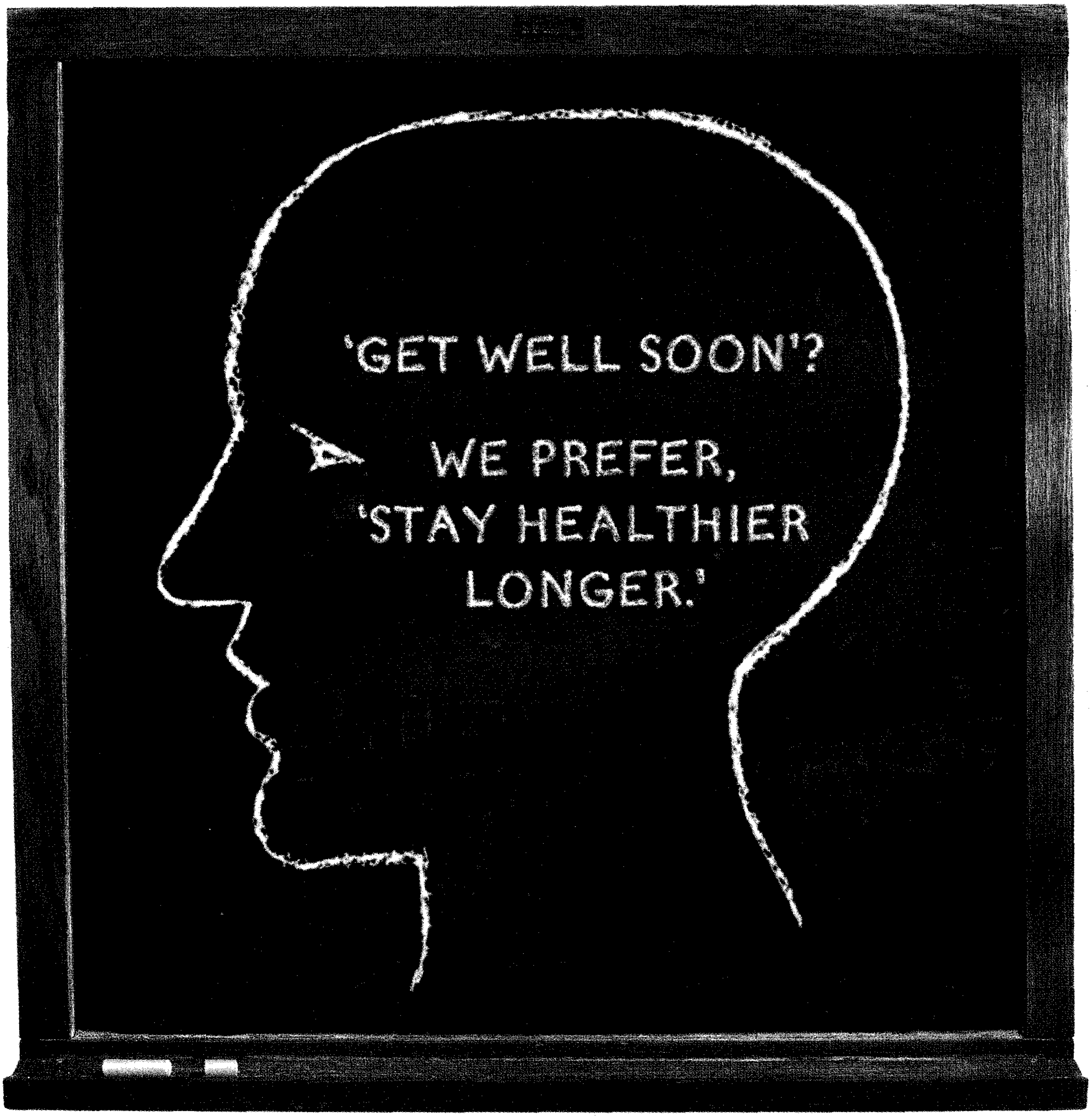
Gary Cooper's diffident strength made him the ideal actor to play the reluctant hero. It was the role in which America had cast itself in the Great War, and, in 1941, as Hitler's armies ravaged Europe, debate raged in the U.S. over the prospect of a repeat performance. That year, Cooper starred in Howard Hawks's rousing "Sergeant York"—the two-disk centerpiece of **"Gary Cooper—The Signature Collection"** (Warner)—a First World War drama that was instantly recognized as effective interventionist propaganda.

The film is based on the true story of Alvin York, a hell-raising dirt farmer from Tennessee who repented and became a devout Christian. Drafted in 1917, he sought conscientious-objector status—unsuccessfully—and grudgingly reported to boot camp. A sympathetic commanding officer sent York back home to reflect on the war effort, equipping him with a book of American history. Inspired by this secular scripture, York, a renowned marksman, brought his turkey-hunting skills to the European battlefields and famously captured a hundred and thirty-two German soldiers. York sold his story with the proviso that he be played by Cooper. Hawks, yielding to the earnest occasion, filmed the tale with a good-humored sentimentality. Jolted by the film's hortatory power, isolationist senators held hearings on what they deemed Hollywood's call to arms, but by February, 1942, when Cooper won an Oscar for the role, America was again at war.

Yet, during the Second World War, many of the greatest American artists preferred subjective abstraction to the prevailing patriotic fervor. In the cinema, undercurrents of detachment could be found in the work of Edgar G. Ulmer. Born in Olmütz (now in the Czech Republic) in 1904, Ulmer worked with the great directors F. W. Murnau and Fritz Lang in Germany before emigrating to the U.S. in 1934. In the engaging documentary **"Edgar G. Ulmer: The Man Off-Screen"** (Kino), Ulmer, who died in 1972, boasts of filming several of his most acclaimed features, including the grunge-noir masterpiece "Detour," from 1945, in a mere six days. Two of his rediscovered wartime works, the lurid film noir "Tomorrow We Live" and the goofball comedy "My Son, the Hero" (Alpha), present views of the alienated underside of American life in wartime, where patriotic trumpery concealed gamblers, gangsters, black marketeers, and women who resented and betrayed men who were away at war. The lovingly compiled **"Edgar G. Ulmer: Archive"** (Image) offers high-quality restorations of several classics, including the 1944 "Bluebeard," starring John Carradine; strikingly, the murderer's psychopathic painting of a victim resembles early Abstract Expressionist works.

—*Richard Brody*

© 2006 Pfizer Inc. Printed in USA


'GET WELL SOON'?
WE PREFER,
'STAY HEALTHIER LONGER.'

Think of it. Americans are living longer and spending more on healthcare. In fact, spending has risen to more than two trillion dollars a year. At Pfizer we're working on ways to help - with innovative medicines that help prevent illnesses and reduce the cost of treating them. We also have programs that provide our medicines to people without prescription coverage.

But we know we have to go further. Across America, Pfizer is partnering with health care providers, state governments and local communities to bring personalized, quality, preventive health solutions to patients; measures like providing personal care managers, 24 hour-a-day nurse call centers, and health education such as diabetes workshops and other group health classes. And the results are clear. These programs are helping keep people healthy and reducing the economic burden of disease, in some cases decreasing hospital stays by as much as 52%.

Today, Pfizer is working toward solutions that mean a happier, healthier tomorrow for us all.

Pfizer

Working for a healthier world™

www.pfizer.com

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—In revival. Dec. 17 and Dec. 19 at 4:30: "Dersu Uzala" (1975, Akira Kurosawa; in Russian).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Films from Spain. All films are in Spanish. Dec. 13 at 1:30 and Dec. 17 at 4: "Life Hanging by a Thread" (1945, Edgar Neville). ♦ Dec. 15 at 4:15 and Dec. 16 at 5:45: "Tirante el Blanco" (2006, Vicente Aranda). ♦ Dec. 16 at 4 and Dec. 19 at 1:30: "Carnival Sunday" (1945, Neville). ♦ Dec. 19 at 3:15: "The Crime on Bordadores Street" (1946, Neville). ♦ Special screenings. Dec. 13 at 6: "Midnight Run" (1988, Martin Brest), followed by a discussion with Charles Grodin. ♦ Dec. 19 at 6:30: "Little Miss Sunshine" (2006, Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris), followed by a discussion with Alan Arkin.

READINGS AND TALKS

"SELECTED SHORTS"
Symphony Space's series pairing actors with short stories continues with a night of works by Edna O'Brien, read by David Rakoff and Fionnula Flanagan. The author will also be on hand to discuss her new novel, "The Light of Evening." (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Dec. 13 at 6:30.)

THE POETRY PROJECT
The poets Mark Pawlak and Bill Zavatsky read from their work. (St. Marks In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door. Dec. 13 at 8.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
The journalist Kurt Andersen, whose ancestors came from Jutland, introduces the 1955 Carl Theodor Dreyer film "Ordet" ("The Word"), which is set on the peninsula. (150 W. 17th St. 212-620-5000, ext. 344. *Dec. 15 at 9:30.*)

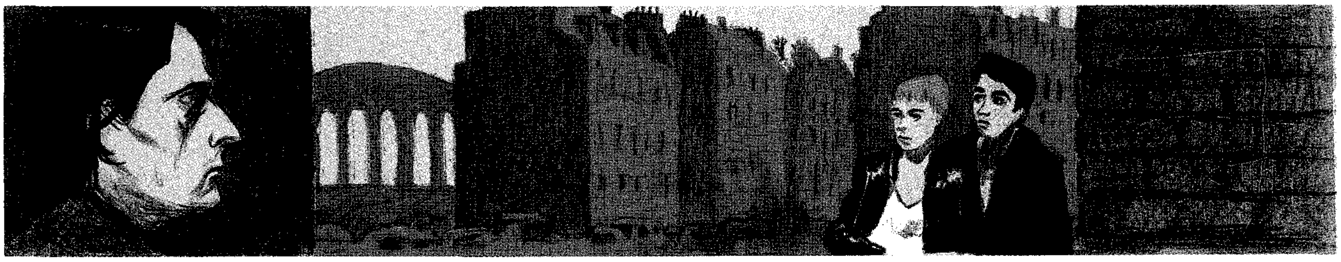
92ND STREET Y
The Y's Unterberg Poetry Center presents a tribute to Robert Bly, with Bill and Judith Moyers, Coleman Barks, Donald Hall, Galway Kinnell, Gioia Timpanelli, Li-Young Lee, and Bly himself. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Dec. 18 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"UNSILENT NIGHT"
In 1992, the composer Phil Kline wrote a holiday piece, recorded different parts of it on cassette tapes, and gave them to a few dozen friends to play, simultaneously, while walking through Greenwich Village. In the ensuing years, this has become a tradition, and those friends have grown into quite a crowd. If you bring your own boom box, you can join in the performance. (Dec. 16 at 6:45, starting at the Arch in Washington Square Park. For more information, visit www.philkline.com.)

"LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS"
The bicycling advocacy group Time's Up! is organizing an evening ride through Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, which is home to some of the city's most elaborate holiday displays. (For more information, visit www.times-up.org. Dec. 17.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
Christie's sale of children's books and illustrations on Dec. 13—just in time for the kid who has everything—is filled with nostalgic delights, like a watercolor by Laurent de Brunhoff depicting Babar's family and one by Beatrix Potter of an adorable mouse ("The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe") knitting in her chair. Grownups can find fulfillment the following day, at an auction of jewelry (featuring pieces from the collection of the fashion maven Helene Arpels), and next week, when the house presents a series of sales of twentieth-century decorative arts and design. Three auctions on Dec. 18 focus on art glass, including (respectively) beautiful Tiffany lamps and vases, Daum pieces from the extensive collection of the late Simon Pinhas, and colorful, translucent works by Gabriel Argy-Rousseau and René Lalique from a private collection. The following day (Dec. 19) is given over to three sales of twentieth-century design, including an offering of mirrors and jewelry by the sculptor and designer Line Vautrin. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Nineteenth-century genre paintings by Isidor Kaufmann, depicting Jewish life in Vienna, and eighteenth-century Dutch silver are among the featured lots in **Sotheby's** sale of Judaica on Dec. 13. A day of carpet sales follows (Dec. 14), after which the house turns its attention to twentieth-century design (Dec. 15), with a general sale in the morning and two specialized auctions featuring American design—Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, and Beaux-Arts Revival, and a whole sale devoted to a private collection of pieces by George Nakashima—in the afternoon. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ **Phillips** gets in on the action with a two-part design sale on Dec. 14. The morning session is rich in early-modern and mid-century pieces, such as a Bauhaus Weimar metal wine carafe made in 1922 by Christian Dell, while the afternoon is devoted to haut-design furniture and objets d'art, such as a sinuous white table by the British firm Future Systems and a collection of gilt-bronze boxes by Line Vautrin. (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)



The films of Jean-Pierre Léaud, at the Alliance Française.

CHRISTOPHE BLAIN

ON THE HORIZON

THE THEATRE
PLAYTIME
Jan. 5

The Pearl Theatre Company presents Lillian Hellman's 1960 drama, "Toys in the Attic," about a New Orleans man surrounded by two doting sisters and a controlling wife. Austin Pendleton directs. (212-589-9802.)

MOVIES
WILD CHILD
Jan. 9-Feb. 27

The actor Jean-Pierre Léaud is a product of the French New Wave. His life runs through it, from childhood, in François Truffaut's "The 400 Blows," to young adulthood, in Jean-Luc Godard's "Masculine Feminine," to maturity, in the works of younger acolytes, such as Olivier Assayas's "Paris Awakens." The French Institute Alliance Française features these films and other Léaud classics. (212-355-6160.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
BACK IN VENICE
Jan. 17

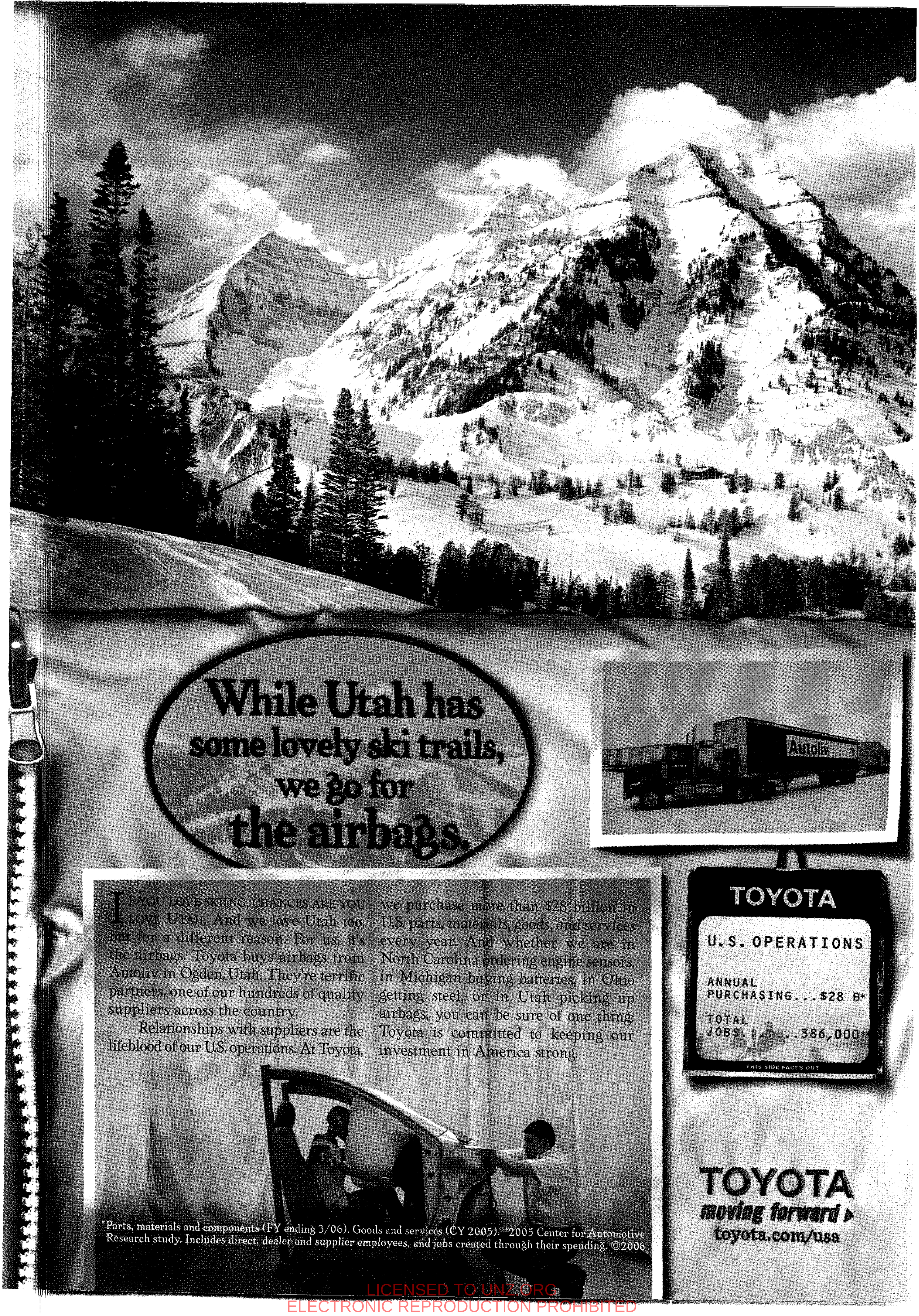
With the Met on hiatus during the third week of January, opera fans will converge on Carnegie Hall for Rossini's "Otello," the latest presentation of Eve Queler's Opera Orchestra of New York, which will feature Ramón Vargas and Ruxandra Donose. (212-247-7800.)

NIGHT LIFE
WORLD TRAVELLERS
Jan. 21

GlobalFest, the annual midwinter gathering, moves to Webster Hall this year. Performers include the Brazilian singer Lenine, the Portuguese vocalist Sara Tavares, and Dengue Fever, which hails from Los Angeles and specializes in Cambodian psychedelic rock of the sixties. (866-468-7619.)

ART
BORDERLINE
Jan. 23-April 29

The American Folk Art Museum will host a retrospective of the work of the self-taught Mexican-born artist Martín Ramírez (1895-1963), who spent three decades confined to a mental hospital in California. His drawings, with their dense and highly personal vocabulary of animals, trains, tunnels, and symbols, are now prized by aficionados of outsider art. (212-265-1040.)


While Utah has some lovely ski trails, we go for the airbags.
Autoliv
TOYOTA
U.S. OPERATIONS
ANNUAL PURCHASING...$28 B*
TOTAL JOBS.......386,000**
THIS SIDE FACES OUT
TOYOTA
moving forward ▸
toyota.com/usa

IF YOU LOVE SKIING, CHANCES ARE YOU LOVE UTAH. And we love Utah too, but for a different reason. For us, it's the airbags. Toyota buys airbags from Autoliv in Ogden, Utah. They're terrific partners, one of our hundreds of quality suppliers across the country.

Relationships with *suppliers* are the lifeblood of our U.S. operations. At Toyota, we purchase more than $28 billion in U.S. parts, materials, goods, and services every year. And whether we are in North Carolina ordering engine sensors, in Michigan *buying* batteries, in Ohio getting steel, or in Utah picking up airbags, you can be sure of one thing: Toyota is committed to keeping our investment in America strong.

*Parts, materials and components (FY ending 3/06). Goods and services (CY 2005). **2005 Center for Automotive Research study. Includes direct, dealer and *supplier* employees, and jobs created through their spending. ©2006

SHARP®

© 2006 Sharp Corporation

AQUOS
SHARP

NOTHING IS LOST

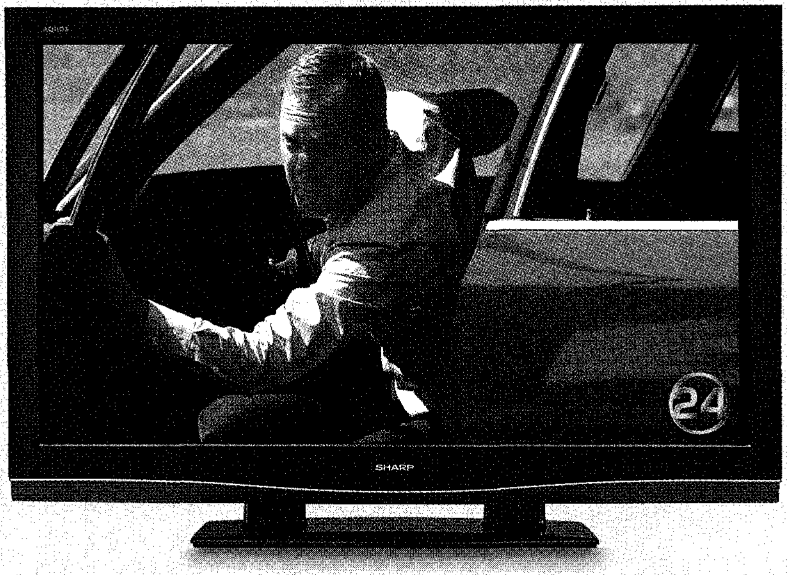
In golf, what isn't seen is as crucial as what's noticed. But even the best players in the world don't pick up on everything. Seeing the game through millions of pixels makes that obvious. On an AQUOS, lost balls are found. Gusts of wind are picked up. The line of a putt is right in front of you. See every detail of every hole with the full HD, 1080p AQUOS, from the leading innovator of Liquid Crystal Television, Sharp. Learn more at **moretosee.com.**

FULL HD 1080P

AQUOS®

THERE'S MORE TO SEE

BEHIND THE SCENES



Outstanding Detail: No clue or dramatic turn is lost when you watch "24" on Sharp AQUOS LC TV, featuring millions of pixels and high contrast ratios. The image quality is paramount and the sleek new design complements any interior.

Starring Emmy®-winning Kiefer Sutherland, "24" can be seen Mondays, 9–10 P.M. ET/PT on FOX.

CRAFTING THE LOOK OF 24

The craft of set design calls for the skills of a draftsman, the acumen of a structural engineer, the eye of an interior decorator, and the sleight of hand of a master magician. **Joseph Hodges, production designer** on FOX TV's long-running series "24" (Season Six débuts with a two-night, four-hour première on January 14th) welcomes the scrutiny of viewers who experience the show on HDTV.

How do you characterize the sets on "24"?

HODGES: "24" has a playful, entertaining quality, like the old "Mission Impossible." It's a stylistic, cool-looking show that's set in the future in made-up places.

What's new in Season Six?

HODGES: We start the season in the Oval Office, which is the first time we have shown the public a space they would recognize. The President goes underground in a later episode to a bunker we built. The inspiration for the bunker's colors came from a Renault Formula 1 car. I wanted it menacing-looking, so it's black and blue and yellow like the car.

What is the design of the Counter Terrorist Unit based on?

HODGES: The CTU (where much of the tense drama takes place) is a space that feels real, but I'd like to think that you've never seen anything like it. It has a subtle patriotic palette: Tabletops are red, iron work is white, and walls are blue. When people from Washington, D.C., visited, they told me they wished they worked in a place like that.

How do you deal with lighting, when each episode is supposed to take place in a single hour?

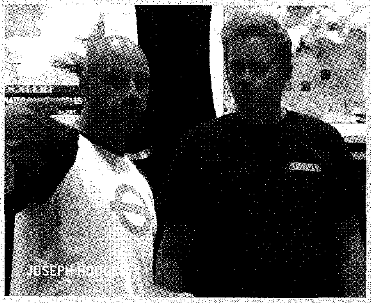
HODGES: A lot of locations are chosen with lighting in mind. If I do my job really well, no one actually notices what we've done. In Season Two, we had Jack Bauer (the CTU operative played by Kiefer Sutherland) take the head of one of the bad guys to a junkyard. Knowing that the sun is constantly moving, we put a camouflage net over the junkyard. We still had sunlight, but it didn't look as if it was changing angles during the course of the day.

Does it make a difference knowing the show is broadcast in HDTV?

HODGES: You see the quality of our work because of HD. I don't allow anything to be half-hearted. We have the best painters, the best plasterers. If you came to the set and walked up to a wall, with the naked eye you would still believe that it's concrete.

How does the HDTV format affect viewers?

HODGES: We may be working in TV, but we make a feature-quality program. HDTV viewers see the quality of the sets and it's all sharper. That's what our audience deserves.

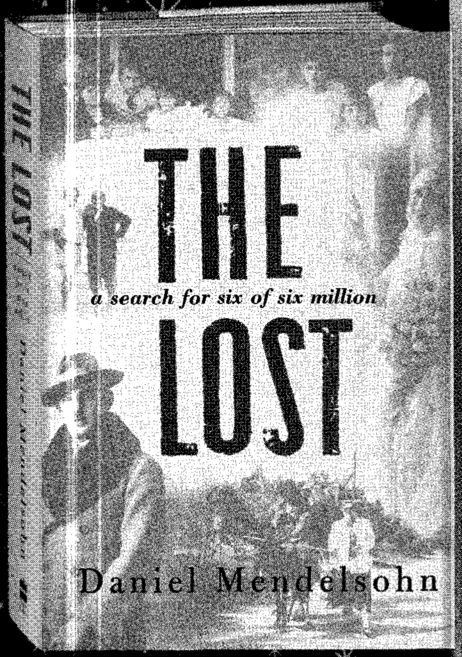


VIEW THIS EMMY® AWARD-WINNING SERIES ON THE EMMY® AWARD-WINNING FULL HD 1080P AQUOS®.

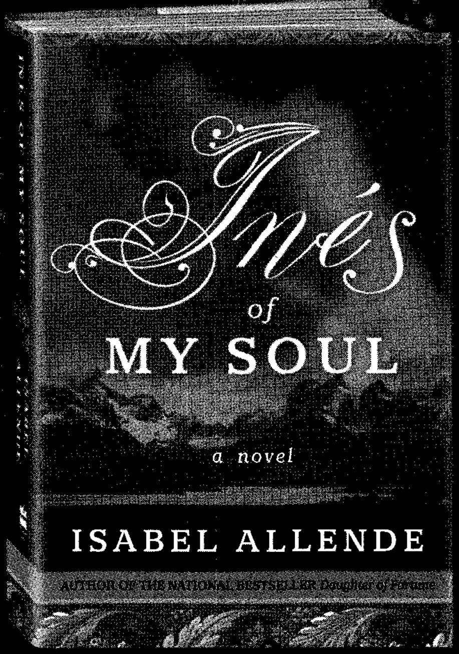
EXPLORE SHARP AQUOS AT MORETOSEE.COM

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOX TV

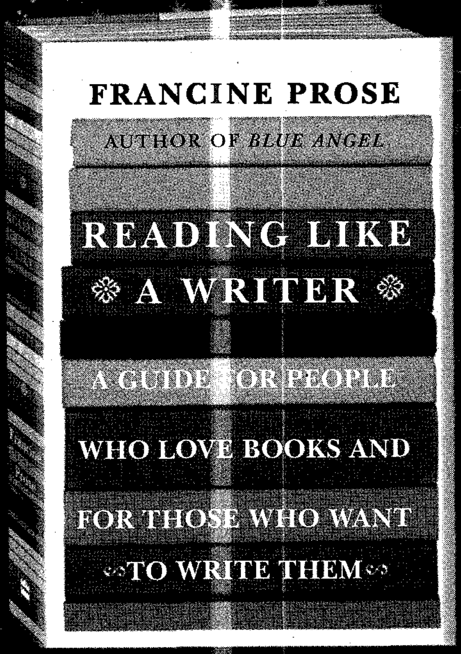
Gifts they'll love to open again and again.


THE LOST
a search for six of six million
Daniel Mendelsohn

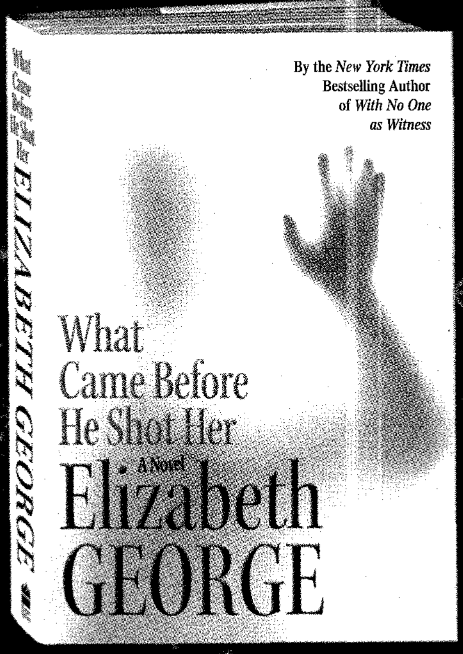
"Remarkable"
—Elie Wiesel, *Washington Post Book World*


Inés of MY SOUL
a novel
ISABEL ALLENDE
AUTHOR OF THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER Daughter of Fortune

"Extraordinary"
—*Elle*


FRANCINE PROSE
AUTHOR OF BLUE ANGEL
READING LIKE A WRITER
A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE BOOKS AND FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO WRITE THEM

"Brilliant"
—*San Francisco Chronicle*


By the New York Times Bestselling Author of With No One as Witness
What Came Before He Shot Her
A Novel
Elizabeth GEORGE

"Riveting"
—*Entertainment Weekly*

HarperCollins*Publishers* www.harpercollins.com

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

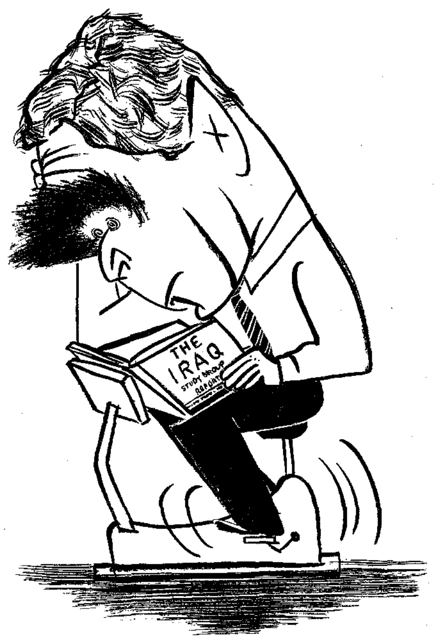
COMMENT
STUDIES SAY

Moments after the report of the Iraq Study Group descended on George W. Bush like a safe from a penthouse, its ten members fanned out in bipartisan squads to assure the world that they weren't blaming anybody. "In our report we say we are not going to review the past, we're going to be looking at where we go from here in the future," Lawrence Eagleburger, who was Secretary of State under Father Bush, told CNN. "We wanted to take the situation as it exists today," Chuck Robb, the former Virginia governor and senator, explained over at MSNBC. "As Senator Robb explained, we made a decision early on not to look back but to look forward," Sandra Day O'Connor, the retired Supreme Court Justice, concurred. "We wanted to describe the situation as we found it."

Given the provenance, authorship, and purpose of "The Iraq Study Group Report," no one need be astonished that it eschews the language of overt culpability. But because it does indeed "take the situation as it exists," and because the present is simply the past's ever-moving outer edge, it cannot help looking back. The indictment is there to see, and it is devastating. The Report's introductory "Letter from the Co-Chairs"—James A. Baker III, Republican, the former Secretary of State (under Bush I), and Lee H. Hamilton, Democrat, the former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee—frames what follows with the bureaucratic equivalent of "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here":

> No one can guarantee that any course of action in Iraq at this point will stop sectarian warfare, growing violence, or a slide toward chaos.

The "Executive Summary" opens with this statement: "The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating." And the "Assessment" section—forty pages of relentlessly declarative sentences—confirms what many capable journalists have reported. It lists what it sees as some of the consequences of a continuation of current policy: greater chaos; greater suffering for the Iraqi people; a humanitarian catastrophe; escalated ethnic cleansing; a broader regional war; Sunni-Shia clashes across the Islamic world; a sharp increase in the price of oil; a still stronger base of operations for terrorists; a reduction in America's global influence; increased chances for failure in Afghanistan; greater polarization within the United States. It lists the "basic services" with which "the Iraqi government is not effectively providing its people," and they are basic indeed: "electricity, drinking water, sewage, health care, and education." And that's the good news, relatively speaking: "In Baghdad and other unstable areas, the situation is much worse."


THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

The Study Group summarizes what it calls the "significant challenges" facing the Iraqi Army in a series of bullet points: "Units lack leadership." "Units lack equipment." "Units lack personnel." "Units lack logistics and support." All of which may be just as well, since there are "significant questions" about whether these units "will carry out missions on behalf of national goals instead of a sectarian agenda." Sound bad? Well, the dolorous accounting of the Army's condition is immediately followed by this:

> *The Iraqi Police*
>
> The state of the Iraqi police is substantially worse than that of the Iraqi Army.

Bada-boom. You can almost hear the rim shot. But there is nothing comic

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

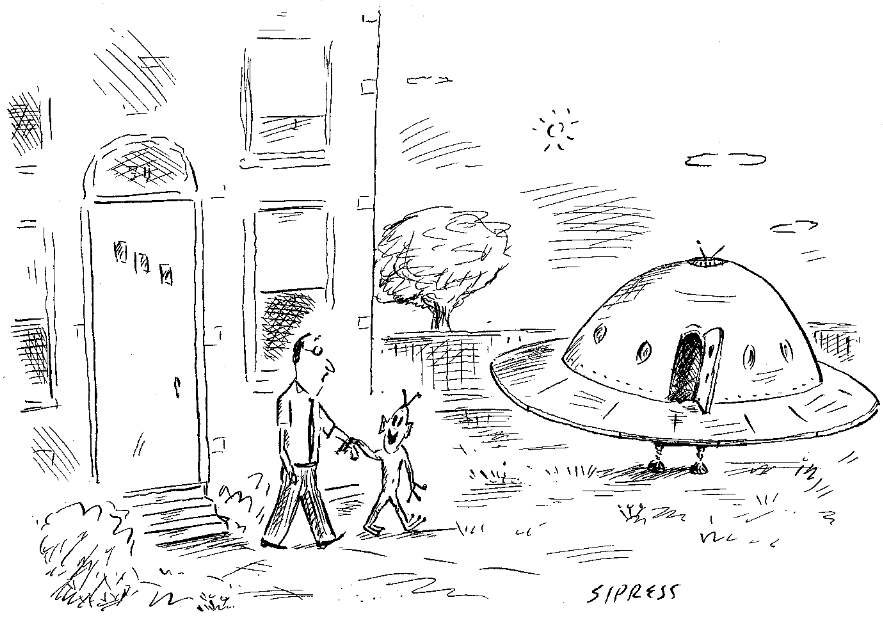
about the details: “Iraqi police cannot control crime, and they routinely engage in sectarian violence, including the unnecessary detention, torture, and targeted execution of Sunni Arab civilians.” As for Iraq’s Facilities Protection Services, which are charged with guarding government ministries, they are merely, in the words of a “senior U.S. official” quoted in the Report, “incompetent, dysfunctional, or subversive.”

Further appalling nuggets lie buried in the recommendations section, which is titled, more hopefully than it reads, “The Way Forward—A New Approach.” We are told, for example, that “a continuing Iraqi commitment of American ground forces at present levels will leave no reserve”—none—“available to meet other contingencies,” including urgently needed reinforcements in Afghanistan. We are told that, five years after the 9/11 attacks, our one-thousand-strong Embassy in Baghdad has just six fluent speakers of Arabic, plus twenty-seven who aren’t fluent. (As the Report does not mention, fifty-five Arabic language specialists have been cashiered from the military for being gay.) And we are told that while eleven hundred attacks took place one day last July, the number officially reported was ninety-three, because “information is systematically collected in a way that minimizes its discrepancy with policy goals.”

The Report’s narrative passages add up to a comprehensive condemnation not only of the conduct and consequences of the Iraq war but also of the Administration’s over-all foreign policy, a condemnation all the more stunning coming from a panel led by Baker and including O’Connor, who, perhaps more than any other two people on earth, were responsible six years ago for promoting Bush from loser of the popular vote to President of the United States. But when the Study Group presents its actual recommendations—seventy-nine of them, neatly numbered and italicized—it loses its vigor and coherence. Some of its suggestions are sensible and to the point (use diplomacy, forswear permanent bases), others sensible but beside the point (be honest about budgeting, renew negotiations over the Israel-Palestine problem), and still others so bland as to be risible (“remain in close and frequent touch with the Iraqi leadership”). Yet if the Study Group’s pitiless description of America’s dilemma in Iraq is to be believed—and it is—then the hope of anything resembling a positive outcome is extremely slim. The Report promises no such outcome. It contends only that what it offers is less bad than the alternatives (though its case against one alternative—what it calls, a little tendentiously, “precipitate” or “premature” withdrawal—is more asserted than argued). That Bush’s war in Iraq is an unmitigated catastrophe has been known for some time. What the Iraq Study Group has done is to make it official.

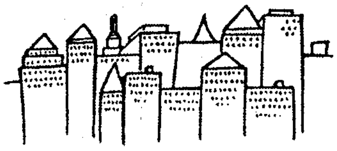
The day after the Report was issued, President Bush held a joint news conference with a visitor, Prime Minister Tony Blair. The President took the opportunity, as the *Times* put it, to “distance himself” from “the central recommendations” of the Study Group—specifically, its calls for diplomatic engagement with Iran and Syria and for pulling back American combat brigades. That was no great surprise. More alarmingly, Bush also distanced himself from the cold shower of reality the Study Group had aimed at him. “I think the analysis of the situation is not really in dispute,” Blair said. But it was in dispute. “The thing I liked about the Baker-Hamilton approach is it discussed the way forward in Iraq,” Bush said—which was to say the thing he didn’t like about it is it discussed what is actually happening in Iraq. When a correspondent suggested that he was “still in denial about how bad things are in Iraq,” the President replied, “It’s bad in Iraq. Does that help?” When another reporter noted that the Study Group wants leaders to be “candid and forthright with people,” he tried. “We have not succeeded as fast as we wanted to succeed,” he said. “Progress is not as rapid as I had hoped,” he said. His problem is success that is insufficiently fast, progress that is insufficiently rapid. Our problem is that he sees it that way.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

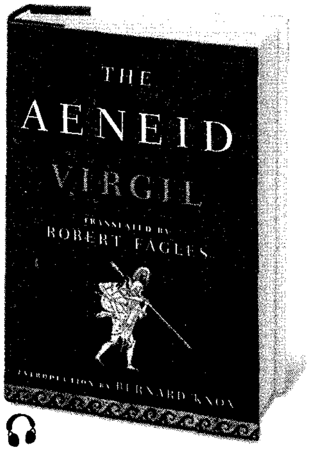


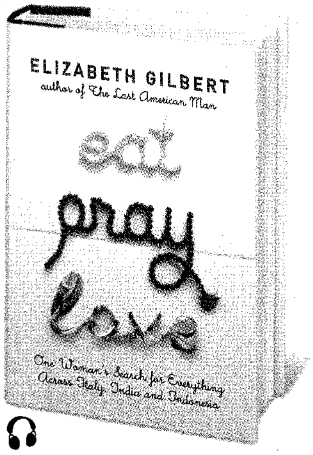
“I found you on Splrg’s List.”

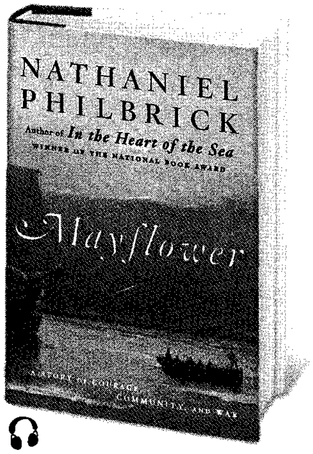
WISHES
JOYRIDE



Among the things that, with only a day’s notice, evidently can’t be procured in New York—not, anyway, at a price that bleeding-heart-liberal mortals would be inclined to pay—is a for-rent luxury convertible sedan. This truth was revealed recently to Ben Wizner and Steven Watt, staff lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union, who were determined to help one of their clients, Khaled el-Masri, realize an uncomplicated, if somewhat unlikely, fantasy. On December 30, 2003, Masri, a forty-year-old unemployed car salesman, a Muslim German citizen and the father of four (now of six), boarded a bus in his

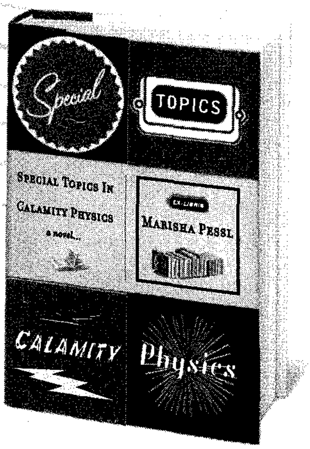

THE
AENEID
VIRGIL
TRANSLATED BY
ROBERT FAGLES
INTRODUCTION BY BERNARD KNOX

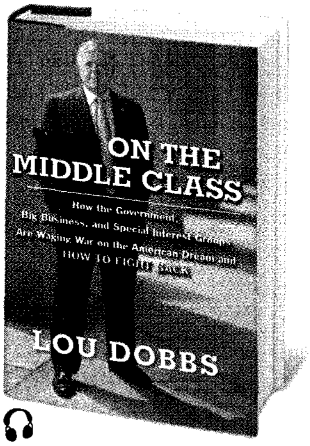

ELIZABETH GILBERT
author of The Last American Man
eat
pray
love
One Woman's Search for Everything
Across Italy, India and Indonesia

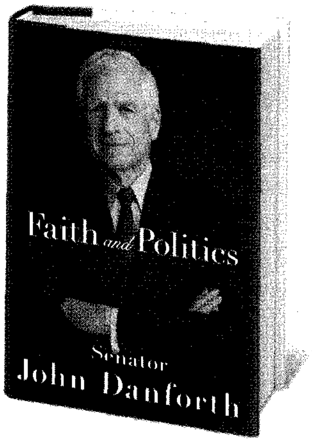

NATHANIEL
PHILBRICK
Author of In the Heart of the Sea
WINNER OF THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD
Mayflower
A STORY OF COURAGE, COMMUNITY, AND WAR

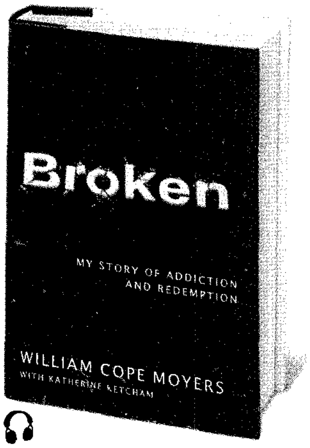
VIKING:
Gifts That Say It All.

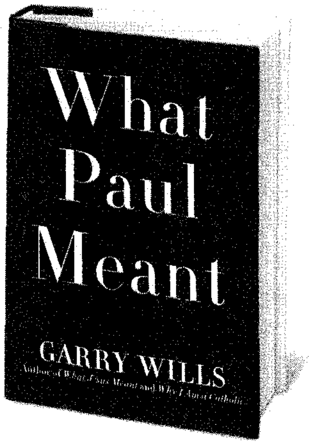
JAN KARON
Author of the Bestselling Mitford Years Books
The
Mitford Bedside
Companion


Special
TOPICS
SPECIAL TOPICS IN
CALAMITY PHYSICS
a novel...
MARISHA PESSL
CALAMITY
Physics


ON THE
MIDDLE CLASS
How the Government,
Big Business, and Special Interest Groups
Are Waging War on the American Dream and
HOW TO FIGHT BACK
LOU DOBBS


Faith and Politics
Senator
John Danforth


Broken
MY STORY OF ADDICTION
AND REDEMPTION
WILLIAM COPE MOYERS
WITH KATHERINE KETCHAM


What
Paul
Meant
GARRY WILLS
Author of What Jesus Meant and Why I Am a Catholic

VIKING

A member of Penguin Group (USA)
www.penguin.com

🎧 **Also available from Penguin Audio**

home town, Ulm, bound for a brief holiday in Macedonia. According to a lawsuit filed on his behalf late last year by the A.C.L.U., the following happened:

At the Macedonian border, Masri's passport was confiscated. For twenty-three days, he was held in a hotel in the city of Skopje, interrogated, not allowed to contact anyone. Next, he was handcuffed, blindfolded, driven to an airport, severely beaten, stripped, anally probed, dressed in a diaper and tracksuit, placed on a plane, drugged, and flown to Afghanistan, where he was imprisoned for more than four months.

It turned out that Masri's abductors—the Central Intelligence Agency—had apparently mistaken him for an alleged Al Qaeda operative with a similar name. Two months after the C.I.A. recognized its error, Masri, again blindfolded and handcuffed, was flown to Albania and released. Back in Germany, he retained a lawyer, who was contacted by the A.C.L.U. The subsequent lawsuit, El-Masri v. Tenet, alleges violations of United States and international human-rights law and fundamentally challenges the legality of the C.I.A.'s "extraordinary-rendition" policy.

El-Masri v. Tenet hasn't progressed very far through the American court system, however. In May, a federal judge granted the government's motion for a summary dismissal. Late last month, the parties appeared before an appellate court, as the A.C.L.U. argued to reverse that ruling. Masri, who had been denied entry to the U.S. by immigration authorities last winter, managed to attend this proceeding. "I am asking the American government to admit its mistakes and to apologize for my treatment," Masri has said. In an interview with the Washington *Post*, he expressed a more mundane wish: "I'd like to drive with the top down in a fancy car through New York City and to look up at all the tall buildings."

Which is how Masri found himself, the other day, riding shotgun in a convertible for a drive through lower Manhattan. Because no fancy rental vehicle had been available, the car was a 2005 royal-blue Mini Cooper. (Anthony Romero, the A.C.L.U.'s executive director, had agreed to lend it so that the lawyers could surprise their client.) "Now my wish gets fulfilled," said Masri, who is broad-shouldered, with a curly graying ponytail and gray-green eyes. A Mini Cooper can, reasonably comfortably, accommodate two in the front and a short-legged adult in the back seat—or, in an extreme situation, a fourth passenger. Ludicrous situation: a reporter squeezes in as well.

Rain is on the horizon. As the car, with Watt behind the wheel and Wizner in the back, along with Manfred Gnjidic, Masri's German attorney, heads north on Water Street, a taxi-driver rolls down his window and says, "You guys must be having a ball. I wish I had a camera."

Near Pearl Street, with the Brooklyn Bridge beckoning, Wizner debates options: "Don't do it, Stephen. We'll be pulled over by the cops. . . . You know what, the hell with it. See where it says 'Passenger Cars Only'? Get on there."

By Cadman Plaza, a van driver pulls alongside: "You guys fit in one more?" Wizner: "He probably thinks we're making a commercial."

Back on the Manhattan Bridge, Wizner says, "Look, Khaled, the Empire State Building."

"*Wunderbar*," says Masri.

"Khaled's interrogation in Macedonia was entirely in English, which he doesn't speak," says Watt. "But he's learning." Wizner does a fist bump with Masri and they both say, à la Ali G, "Re-*spek*."

Cruising through Chinatown, Masri says (with Gnjidic interpreting), "I can't decide where to look." A moment later: "There are a lot of Chinese here."

Up Lafayette, as it passes the Public Theatre, Wizner gestures to some buildings and says to Gnjidic, "Tell Khaled that if he gets two million dollars, like Brandon Mayfield"—an Oregon man wrongly arrested in connection with the 2004 terror bombings in Madrid—"he can buy a room in one of these buildings."

Lafayette to Park, then west. Down Fifth for an eyeful of the Flatiron Building (the original reason to look up in New York City), around Washington Square Park, Houston to Broadway. Wizner, who is not the only back-seat passenger to have lost circulation in his legs, says, "You've seen a very small part of Manhattan, Khaled. I'll show you on a map." The rain arrives. As Watt searches the dashboard for a button to raise the convertible's roof, Wizner advises, "Just press everything all at once."

Past the Woolworth Building, City Hall Park, Trinity Church: "We're very near Ground Zero, Khaled"—very near, in a chain of causation, the source of his nightmare.

Traffic barely moving. A truck driver behind the Mini Cooper blasts his horn. "Do you understand, Khaled," Wizner asks, "why nobody ever drives around New York for pleasure?"

—*Mark Singer*

THREE LIVES DEPT.
PROLIFIC

Eva Zeisel, the ceramicist and industrial designer, doesn't like to call herself an artist, even though it has been sixty years since the Museum of Modern Art gave her a solo exhibition—a first for a creator of mass-produced housewares. "I am a maker of useful things," she said the other day in her apartment, near Columbia. "Art has more ego to it than what I do." But if it's modesty that makes her wary of enshrinement it's also a pioneer's intolerance for being confined.

Born into a Jewish Hungarian family of freethinking patricians, the teen-age Eva was happiest in the wild garden of her parents' villa. She left its sanctuary eighty years ago and apprenticed herself to a potter and oven-maker in Budapest. For the next decade, she camped cheerfully in a series of makeshift lodgings near the various factories in Germany and Russia where she learned her trade. The months in Jazz Age Paris that Zeisel spent with her childhood friend and sometime lover Arthur Koestler, and an interlude in Weimar Berlin, living near the Romanisches Café, were the idylls in a youth of hard travel, ephemeral romance, and the gritty labor of creating beauty.

By her mid-twenties, Zeisel had mastered every phase of manufacture, from drafting to product promotion. She moved to the Soviet Union in 1932, and by 1935 she had become the artistic director of Russia's china and glass industry. Her mother was visiting her in Moscow a year later, when the secret police knocked at their door. Zeisel was imprisoned for the next sixteen months, mostly in solitary confinement, on the charge of plotting Stalin's assassination. She resisted her interrogators until the day that, as she put it in her memoirs, she betrayed her dignity with a false confession. (Koestler drew heavily upon her accounts of this ordeal for "Darkness at Noon.") But the authorities, rather than shoot her, as they had done to most of her alleged co-conspirators, deported her to Vienna, where she somehow caught the last train out before the Nazi invasion.

Last month, Zeisel celebrated her hundredth birthday. "Still alive, still working—I don't like the word 'still,'" she said. She has lived on the Upper West Side since 1938, when she and her second husband, the sociologist Hans Zeisel, arrived in New York. A few weeks later, she found work in a Manhattan factory designing ceramic miniatures. Her two children were born in the early nineteen-forties, by which time she was also teaching at the Pratt Institute and lecturing at MOMA. The playful organic shapes of Zeisel's Town and Country line for Red Wing and her curvaceous white dinner service for Hall China charmed postwar America.

The mid-century was a second heyday for Zeisel. Her third is right now. To coincide with her birthday, Pratt mounted a retrospective of nine decades in clay, glass, metal, wood, and plastic. The West Fourteenth Street gallery was crowded with design students stunned by her modernity. "What is a hundred?" she asked. "One more than ninety-nine."

The young Eva was a slight, though formidable, girl with an infectious appetite for pleasure. The centenarian has limpid eyes and a crown of white hair. She was nestled in a wing chair under a lap robe, surrounded by her heirlooms. A table of her own design had been drawn up to an Empire divan, and was set with ceramics from her best-selling 2005 collection for Crate & Barrel. Zeisel has always been a maverick modernist, and her formal templates are abstracted from nature: the penguin's belly; the duck's bill; the splash of a milk drop; the oval of an elm leaf; the whorled rim of an ear.

In the kitchen, a young Russian modelmaker, Georgii Bogdevich, was shaving plasticine from the prototype of a chalice-like footed mug that is part of Zeisel's new line of Royal Stafford earthenware. When Bogdevich offered the mug for her inspection, Zeisel chafed it in her cupped palms. Though she wasn't happy with the proportions ("not enough emotion yet"), this "play" with a model, she said, is the defining moment of gestation. "I think with my hands. I design things to be touched—not for a museum. A piece is ready when it has the shape of something to cherish."

—Judith Thurman

HOUSE TOUR

COME HERE OFTEN?

One recent evening, in the barrens of the Financial District, the hotelier André Balazs was throwing a party for an imaginary friend. His name was William Beaver, in reference to the downtown intersection upon which Balazs is building William Beaver House, a fifty-two-story condominium "specially designed," its promotional materials assert, "for New York's highest achievers." Beaver—who is actually a spiffy cartoon rodent, given to international travel and fine brandies—is the project's mascot as well as proto-inhabitant. His high achievements extend to every field but one: monogamous relationships. Recalling a coed dorm or the stew zoos of the nineteen-sixties, Beaver House is meant to be a place you can bring someone (or someones—many units include showers big enough for three). If not, pickup opportunities are part of the floor plan. See you at the sunken conversation pit!

Beaver House is a ground-up construction, and so, by the time of the launch party, the conversation pit was not yet operational. Neither were the fireside wireless Internet, the billiard table, the basketball court, the movie theatre (champagne service, "cinema beds"), or the glass-bottomed hot tub (visible from a drive-in lobby). Apartments are expected to cost between eight hundred thousand dollars and $2.4 million. The complex will not be equipped with a wine cellar, because, as Balazs said, "at this price point, people aren't interested." Anyway, he hopes to appeal to the sort of New Yorker found, these days, less often in Manhattan than in Williamsburg or Hoboken, and perhaps more partial to Jager bombs than Pouilly-Fuissé.

"When I first heard about this place, I thought, I've got to live here," a prospective resident said, sitting on a purplish daybed in a model one-bedroom that had been set up in a former bank that is serving as Beaver House's sales office/occasional night club. He introduced himself as William. Another guest, Helen, asked his last name. He replied, "That's Gaines—like capital gains."

Shimmying on pedestals, clad in black-and-yellow leather unitards, were a troupe of Beaver go-go girls. But Gaines—a mojito man ("Summer, winter, I drink 'em all year round") who had had to settle for a screwdriver—was undistracted. "I heard this sofa cost eighty-five thousand dollars," he said, before expressing disappointment that the bathtubs were not top-of-the-line. "What I was telling Heather," he said, gesturing toward Helen, "is that for a tub that size—hell yeah, why shouldn't it be a Jacuzzi?" He approved of the bathroom counters, though: "They're set in the wall, so you could sit on it, jump on it, whatever else." He winked.

All the model rooms were furnished, and it was fascinating to see what personal effects the real-estate marketers had deemed befitting of a swinging Manhattan single. Apparently, he (or she) uses Marvis toothpaste and washes his hair with Modern Organic Products C-System Hydrating Shampoo. He reads *Eros*, *Surface*, and *Gotham*, "Dr. Atkins' Quick and Easy New Diet Cookbook," and the collected works of Shakespeare; his closet contains white canvas Jack Purcells (four pairs) and dress shirts (size 16½ 34-35). Artfully strewn across his vanity are a razor, an eyelash curler, two toothbrushes, and several abalone bangle bracelets. His wicked sense of fun is apparent even in the bathroom. "These are our horned ducks. It's a party tub," a Balazs employee said, reaching to grab some diabolical rubber duckies from behind a loofah.

In the galley kitchen, a broker was demonstrating a hideaway sink. "In Europe," he said, "not that many people expose their appliances." The inauthentically plentiful contents of the refrigerator brought to mind a hotel minibar: salami, Dean & DeLuca smokehouse almonds, Veuve Clicquot, blini, and three kinds of tequila. According to Gaines, who says he sometimes goes on five dates a week (but spends the weekends recuperating, because, "as you know, everybody goes out Monday through Thursday in Manhattan"), the bachelor life style requires a hospitable environment to come home to. "I can grill steaks, but I like to go to Whole Foods and get those little salmon puffs when company is over," he said. "I usually make vodka drinks, and play house music, or some slow Janet Jackson."

Nearby, André Balazs was talking quietly about "trying to fast-track creating a sense of community." He explained that the name William Beaver and its attendant innuendos "seem to set an intellectual hurdle—you get it or you don't."

Balazs's first apartment in New York was at 96 Greene Street. He began reminiscing fondly about watching the merchants who occupied the stories below him loading bundles of rags from the front landing. When he lived there, he was young and unattached and the building's sole residential tenant.

—*Lauren Collins*

THE PICTURES
CHARACTER ACTOR

The character actor comes down from Canada. Various handlers—Fisher, Jeremy, Judy, Cara, Nicole—pack his schedule tight. He stays in a suite at the Waldorf Towers, has a few French fries, changes his clothes, and goes on forays to midtown screening rooms where people ask him questions about his new movie. If he had his children with him, he'd take them to Serendipity, because five years ago he played a Bloomingdale's salesman in a movie with that name.

Eugene Levy, of the bushy black eyebrows, the crossable eyes, and the nasal, clerkish voice, has played, among other roles, a polka accordionist named Stan Shmenge and a newscaster named Earl Camembert ("SCTV"), a hairy sunbather ("Club Paradise"), a clueless dad ("American Pie" and its several sequels), a dental-tools salesman ("The Man"), and, in a series of Christopher Guest films, which he also co-wrote, a song-and-dance dentist ("Waiting for Guffman"), a dog-lover with two left feet ("Best in Show"), an addled folksinger ("A Mighty Wind"), and, most recently, a washed-up talent agent named Morley Orfkin ("For Your Consideration"). He portrays geeks and squares with great affection, sapping bit or broad parts of their unkindness, and brings a kind of heedless pride to stupidity and ineptitude. He has occasionally been the best thing about a bad movie.

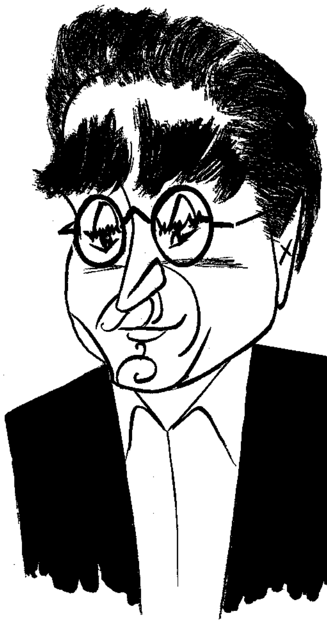
A window in the schedule: One recent afternoon, Levy went for a stroll and wound up at P. J. Clarke's, where he found a stool at the bar. He ordered a vodka tonic; a companion asked for a Guinness. "Is that, like, a stout, a stout ale?" Levy asked, in all apparent seriousness. "It has the really foamy-looking suds?" When some minutes passed and no drinks arrived, the order was repeated, and Levy remarked, about the bartender, "Boy, so far he's zero for four." The bartender shot him a dirty look.

"For Your Consideration" is a comedy about a troupe making a small independent film called "Home for Purim," and about what happens when a few of the actors are the beneficiaries of Oscar buzz. There is a scene in the film in which a publicist interviews the screenwriters of "Home for Purim," for an E.P.K.—an electronic press kit. The publicist begins the interview by saying, simply, "Tell me—Purim. Writers. You're writers."

This tactic was practiced on Levy, at the bar, the underlying question being what does it mean to be a writer of a film in which all the dialogue is improvised. "What we write is a detailed scene-by-scene outline," Levy said. He continued, "I call it a screenplay without dialogue."

Levy lives in Toronto, but spends part of the year in Los Angeles. He doesn't do any other writing, aside from the work with Guest, although he often revises his lines in other movies. Generally, he pares away the jokiness and tries to make his characters more realistic. Levy is not jokey, unless you ask about eyebrow upkeep: "Eight or ten times a day I hold my breath as long as I can." And: "They have their own agent."

Levy finds it annoying when, during photo shoots or interviews, he is expected to get wacky—to act like one of his characters. He doesn't do appearances in character, except for a turn, with John Candy, as the Shmenge Brothers on Letterman ten years ago and a live performance, during the 2004 Oscars, as Mitch Cohen, the folksinger in "A Mighty Wind." He contrasted that with the antics of Sacha Baron Cohen.



Eugene Levy

"It's the Andy Kaufman school of comedy, which is not something I'm a proponent of," Levy said. "When you push the envelope to the point of losing the comedy, you're playing to an audience of one: yourself, and maybe your manager. The difference is Borat is actually funny."

As Levy was walking toward the door, a patron called out, "Eugene! I love your work." Levy thanked him. Outside, the sky had darkened. "Uh-oh, rain coming," he said. As he was crossing the street, the light went red and the cars began nosing into the crosswalk. "Oh, boy," he muttered, and quickened his step.

—*Nick Paumgarten*

Energy. Hydrocarbons, low carbons, or both?

Natural gas One way to lower carbon emissions is to expand the energy menu, with cleaner burning natural gas. Last year, we invested $1.5 billion to increase natural gas supplies in the U.S., bringing cleaner energy to homes and businesses across the country.

Alternatives We're investing up to $8 billion over the next ten years in solar, wind, natural gas and hydrogen to provide low carbon electricity. By 2015, we estimate that our business will eliminate CO_2 emissions by 24 million metric tons a year. It's a start.

bp

beyond petroleum®

© 2006 BP p.l.c.

bp.com

MEDICAL DISPATCH

THE RIGHT TO A TRIAL

Should dying patients have access to experimental drugs?

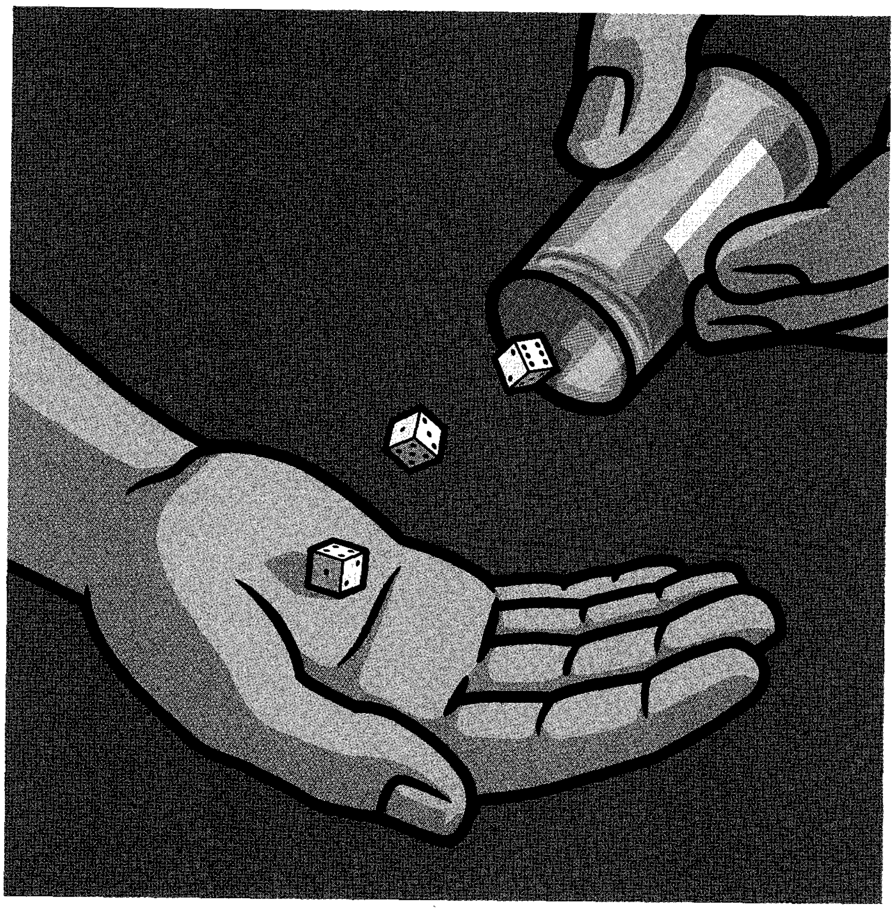
BY JEROME GROOPMAN

In 2002, Kianna Karnes, a forty-one-year-old nurse and mother of four in Brownsburg, Indiana, was given a diagnosis of kidney cancer. She had surgery to remove the tumor, but a year later the cancer spread to her bones. Karnes's doctors treated her with interleukin-2, a protein that stimulates the immune system and, in its synthetic form, was the only medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use against kidney cancer. The drug causes high fevers and the accumulation of fluid in the lungs, and it shrinks tumors in only fifteen per cent of cases. "High-dose interleukin-2 damn near killed her," Karnes's father, John Rowe, recalled recently. "It's a brutal treatment, but her husband pushed her pretty hard, because he didn't want to lose her."

Karnes did not improve on interleukin-2, and Rowe began to look into experimental therapies. Four years earlier, he, too, had received a diagnosis of a life-threatening cancer, chronic myelogenous leukemia, for which there were few effective treatments. He had found the Web site of a man from South Carolina with leukemia, who had enrolled in a clinical trial of an experimental drug, now called Gleevec, and had experienced a remarkable remission. Rowe learned about a trial comparing Gleevec with interferon, then the standard therapy for his illness, and asked his doctor to help him apply. He was the last patient to be admitted. "Luckily, I got the good stuff," he told me, referring to Gleevec. His cancer has been in remission for five years.

While Rowe was recovering, he worked on Capitol Hill, in the office of Dan Burton, a Republican congressman from Indiana, who chaired the House Government Reform Committee. He became friendly with Frank Burroughs, whose daughter Abigail had died of a head-and-neck cancer at the age of twenty-one, after being denied admission to a clinical trial for a drug that might have helped her. After her death, Burroughs founded the Abigail Alliance, an advocacy group that seeks to make experimental drugs—commonly defined as drugs that are being tested by a pharmaceutical company and have yet to be approved or rejected by the F.D.A.—available to people with terminal illnesses. In 2004, Rowe learned from the Abigail Alliance that Pfizer and Bayer had each developed a drug for kidney cancer and were conducting clinical trials. But, while he was trying to enroll Kianna in a trial, she learned that her cancer had spread to her brain. Surgeons removed the tumors, but a history of brain cancer almost always disqualifies a patient from participating in a trial. Such patients are prone to seizures, and it can be difficult to distinguish symptoms caused by an experimental therapy from those caused by the illness it is supposed to be treating. Rowe tried to obtain one of the drugs through a provision in F.D.A. regulations known as "compassionate use," which allows pharmaceutical companies, with the agency's permission, to release an experimental drug to a patient who is not enrolled in a clinical trial. With the help of the Abigail Alliance he contacted Pfizer and Bayer to discuss compassionate use, but he made little headway.

"By this time, we were way down the road, and Kianna was in dire straits," Rowe said. "So I finally asked Congressman Burton for help." Burton told a staff member to look into Karnes's case, and, in March, 2005, Rowe got a call from Robert Pollock, a journalist on the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal*, who had been writing about the efforts of politicians in Congress to prevent the husband of Terri Schiavo, the brain-dead Florida woman, from removing her feeding tube. "I think if the Congress can pass a law for Terri Schiavo, a single person,



Increasing distribution of experimental therapies may entail risks to science and safety.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

that's O.K.," Pollock told Rowe. "But there are a lot of people like your daughter. And I think Congress should pass a law to help all of them." On March 24th, the *Journal* published an editorial titled "How About a 'Kianna's Law'?," urging Congress to pass legislation requiring the F.D.A. to grant dying patients access to experimental drugs.

That morning, Burton's office contacted Pfizer and Bayer, as well as the F.D.A. In the afternoon, an F.D.A. official called Rowe and told him that if either of the companies submitted an application for compassionate use on Karnes's behalf the agency would approve it. A couple of hours later, Kianna's doctor heard from representatives of Pfizer and Bayer, offering to prepare applications for Karnes. "At nine-forty-one that same night, Kianna died," Rowe told me. "Just like Abigail. Too little, too late."

By January, both experimental drugs had been approved by the F.D.A. for use against advanced kidney cancer. "Here is a case where her old man understood about clinical trials," Rowe said. "I knew about compassionate use; I had a friendship with a powerful member of Congress; I've got the *Wall Street Journal* behind me. But I still couldn't save her life. Now, what about the thousands of people out there who don't have these kinds of resources available to them? I don't know that either of these drugs would have saved Kianna's life. But wouldn't it have been nice to give her a chance?"

Families of seriously ill patients are understandably consumed by a desire to help, and stories about unexpected recoveries inspire hope that an experimental drug might prove to be lifesaving; it's possible that Abigail Burroughs and Kianna Karnes would now be alive had they been able to take one. Yet a similar impulse—to protect patients' lives—lies behind F.D.A. regulations restricting access to such drugs. Guaranteeing drug safety has been part of the agency's mandate since 1938, when Congress passed the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act after more than a hundred people died from taking a medicine for strep throat which contained diethylene glycol, an active ingredient in antifreeze. Today, the vast majority of patients with life-threatening diseases are treated with drugs that have been approved by the F.D.A. after a stringent evaluation process designed to insure that they are safe and effective. It typically takes a pharmaceutical company six and a half years from the time it discovers a promising molecule to gather enough data to apply to the F.D.A. for permission to test a drug on patients. Completing the clinical trials requires, on average, another seven years: an initial set (Phase I), usually involving fewer than a hundred patients, to determine the maximum tolerated dose and likely side effects; a second set (Phase II), involving several hundred patients, to identify the diseases—or stages of a disease—that are affected by the experimental therapy; and a final set (Phase III), in which the drug is given to several thousand patients and compared with another drug that has already been approved by the F.D.A., or with a placebo. After the trials, the F.D.A. reviews the results and, usually in consultation with an advisory panel of experts, decides whether to approve an experimental drug. Drug companies pay most of the costs for clinical trials, and by the time a drug reaches the market the manufacturer will have spent nearly a billion dollars on its development.

Nearly ninety per cent of drugs that enter Phase I trials are eventually abandoned because they are shown to be unsafe or ineffective. (Last week, Pfizer announced that it was cancelling its Phase III trial of torcetrapib, an experimental drug for heart disease, after eighty-two patients in the study died. Pfizer had spent almost a billion dollars on torcetrapib, which had shown exceptional promise in earlier trials. "This drug, if it worked, would probably have been the largest-selling pharmaceutical in history," Steven E. Nissen, the chairman of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, told the *Times*.) In the past decade, the number of new drugs approved by the F.D.A. has fallen sharply. According to a recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, between 1994 and 1997 the agency approved an average of nearly thirty-six new drugs a year, but between 2001 and 2004 the approval rate averaged just twenty-three a year.

The Bush Administration, seeking to reverse this trend, has appointed new leaders to the F.D.A., including Andrew von Eschenbach, the recently confirmed commissioner, who is a cancer specialist from Houston and a close friend of the

You don't have
to leave your own
country to find
third-world poverty.

In Appalachia, sad faces of children, like Mandy's, will haunt you. There are so many children like her-children who are deprived of the basic necessities right here in America.

You can sponsor a boy or girl in need through Children Incorporated. Just $28 a month will help provide clothing, shoes, school supplies and food as well as a feeling that someone cares. We'll send you a picture and story of the child you will be helping. Please write, call or visit our website to enroll. Your help will mean so much.

**Write to: Children Incorporated,
4205 Dover Road, Dept. NY12M6,
Richmond, VA 23221-3267 USA**

☐ I wish to sponsor a ☐ boy, ☐ girl,
in ☐ USA ☐ Africa, ☐ Latin America,
☐ Middle East, ☐ Asia, ☐ Greatest need.

☐ I will give $28 a month ($336 a year).
Enclosed is my gift for a full year ☐,
the first month ☐.

☐ I can't sponsor, but I will help $ ________ .

Name

Address

City State Zip

☐ Check or M.O. ☐ AMEX ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card No. Expiration Date

Signature

www.childrenincorporated.org
1-800-538-5381

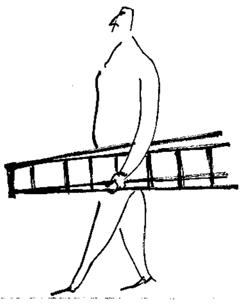
Children
INCORPORATED
Share in their future

U.S. gifts are fully tax deductible.
Annual financial statements are available on request.

Bush family; and Scott Gottlieb, the deputy commissioner for medical and scientific affairs, who, as a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, published frequent editorials arguing for a more flexible approach to drug approval, particularly for cancer drugs. "The FDA is trying to save patients from the harmful effects of new medicines that haven't fully proved their mettle," Gottlieb wrote in an Op-Ed piece in the *Oklahoman*, in May, 2005. "In the process, many more patients will die waiting for the good medicines than from using bad ones."

At the same time, the Abigail Alliance, which shares this view, has gained political influence. In November, 2005, Senator Sam Brownback, a Republican from Kansas, who survived melanoma and is the co-chair of the Senate Cancer Caucus, introduced a bill that would compel the F.D.A. to make experimental drugs available to seriously ill patients who have exhausted standard treatments. Brownback, who had met with Frank Burroughs and read about Kianna Karnes in the *Wall Street Journal*, called the bill "Kianna's Law." Six months later, the Abigail Alliance won its first victory in court against the F.D.A., when the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld, in a two-to-one decision, the group's argument, in Abigail Alliance v. Andrew von Eschenbach, that access to experimental drugs is a constitutional right.

The opinion—by Judge Judith Rogers, a Clinton appointee, and Chief Justice Douglas Ginsburg, a Reagan appointee—shocked legal scholars and officials at the F.D.A., which had begun drafting proposals aimed at increasing patients' access to experimental drugs. The agency, determined not to cede control of drug regulation to Congress or the courts, intends to release some of the proposals for public comment this week. According to senior F.D.A. officials, the agency is also developing plans for a program that would encourage drug companies to distribute experimental drugs to thousands of cancer patients through their personal physicians. If adopted, the program would constitute the most ambitious initiative by the agency in two decades.

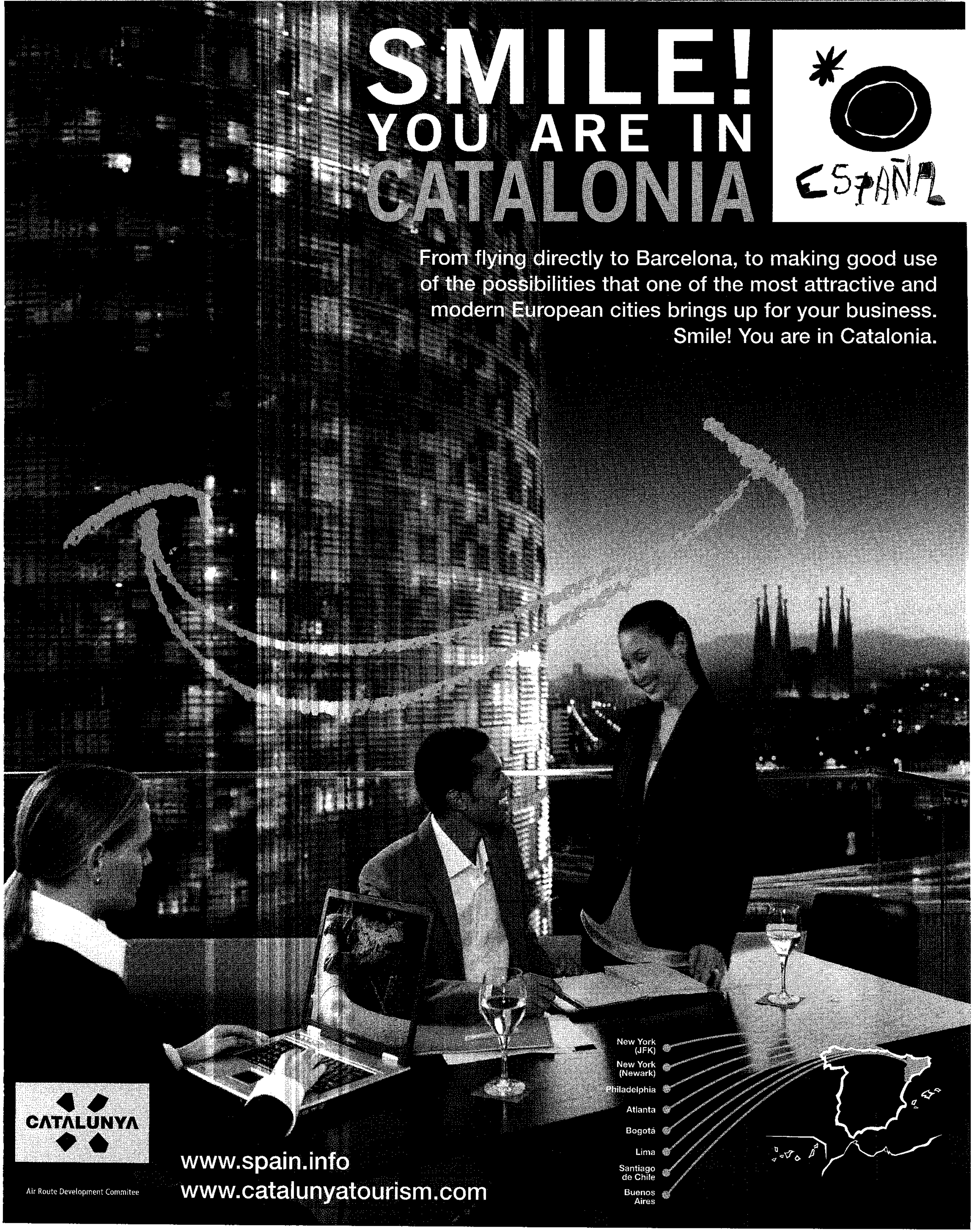


The F.D.A.'s reforms, the D.C. circuit-court decision, and the Brownback bill present different guidelines for providing access to experimental drugs, and it's not clear which, if any, of the proposed changes will ultimately take effect. Nevertheless, the efforts reflect an unlikely convergence of interests between patient-advocacy groups and the deregulation-minded Bush Administration, and they underscore the F.D.A.'s vulnerability to political pressure. Some critics worry that the current regulations aren't strict enough to protect patients. (In September, the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, released a report that was sharply critical of the F.D.A., and, in particular, of a rule passed by Congress in 1992 that allows pharmaceutical companies to pay the agency substantial fees to expedite reviews of their drugs. The report castigated Congress for failing to provide the F.D.A. with sufficient funds to monitor drugs after they have been approved. It cited Vioxx, the arthritis drug that was withdrawn in 2004 after it was found to double the risk of heart attack.) The challenge will be to insure that deregulation does not occur at the expense of science and safety. "The common perception is that safety and efficiency in drug development are not compatible," Scott Gottlieb told me. "I don't think that's true."

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, drug companies often tested experimental medications by sending them to doctors to give to their patients. The F.D.A. required little information from drug-makers about side effects and had no standard criteria for determining safety or efficacy. In 1960, Frances Kelsey, a doctor and pharmacologist, joined the F.D.A. as one of seven full-time physician drug reviewers. Assigned to evaluate thalidomide, which had been approved in forty-two countries, including much of Europe, as a sedative and an anti-nausea drug, Kelsey was shocked at how little data the agency had about the drug's safety, and she was concerned about its side effects. Richardson-Merrell, which wanted to market thalidomide in the United States, had already distributed it to twenty thousand patients in this country, but Kelsey refused to approve the drug and ordered the company to conduct additional clinical studies. Later, it was discovered that thousands of mothers—most of them outside the United States—who took thalidomide during pregnancy to combat nausea had delivered babies with severely deformed arms and legs, segmented intestines, and closed ear canals. In 1962, Congress passed the Kefauver-Harris Amendments, which required pharmaceutical companies to show the F.D.A. that their drugs were effective and gave the agency greater control over clinical trials.

However, with the advent of the AIDS epidemic, in the nineteen-eighties, regulations that had been praised for protecting the public's health were attacked as too restrictive. AIDS activists demanded what they called "expanded access," arguing that AIDS patients who were not enrolled in a clinical trial should be allowed to take experimental drugs under the supervision of their personal physicians. (They also requested that the F.D.A. do away with clinical trials of AIDS drugs in which some patients received a placebo.) In 1987, the F.D.A. agreed to allow patients who could not participate in clinical trials—because they were too sick or lived too far from a university hospital, where trials are typically conducted—to obtain experimental drugs from their doctors on a compassionate basis, or as part of a national expanded-access program. In both cases, only experimental drugs that had completed at least Phase II of clinical trials were eligible for distribution.

AIDS activists persuaded the F.D.A. to relax its policy on experimental drugs in part by relying on dramatic protest tactics and sympathetic media coverage; members of ACT-UP and other groups covered themselves with fake blood and staged "die-ins" in front of the White House and the National Institutes of Health. Pharmaceutical companies, under political pressure to provide promising therapies for AIDS patients, who at the time faced certain death, agreed to distribute the drugs, despite considerable legal and financial risks. (Drug companies are typically reluctant to supply experimental drugs outside a clinical trial, fearing that patients who suffer adverse reactions will sue the company or that the F.D.A. will demand more extensive safety testing. Moreover, manufacturing


SMILE!
YOU ARE IN
CATALONIA
ESPAÑA
CATALUNYA
Air Route Development Commitee
www.spain.info
www.catalunyatourism.com
New York (JFK)
New York (Newark)
Philadelphia
Atlanta
Bogotá
Lima
Santiago de Chile
Buenos Aires

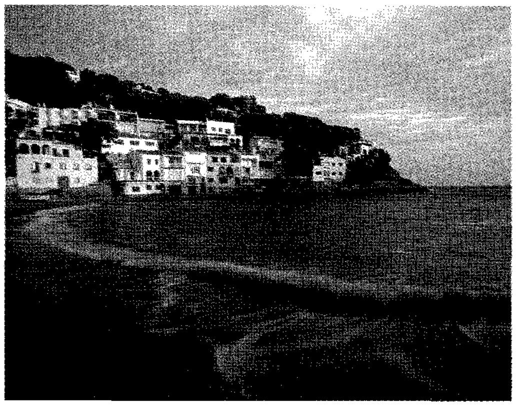
From flying directly to Barcelona, to making good use of the possibilities that one of the most attractive and modern European cities brings up for your business. Smile! You are in Catalonia.

TOURIST OFFICES OF SPAIN

Water Tower Place, suite 915 East 845 North Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60611 Tel. 1.312.642.1992 Fax: 1.312.642.9817 e-mail: chicago@tourspain.es
8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Tel: 1.323.658.7188 Fax: 1.323.658.1061 e-mail: losangeles@tourspain.es
1395 Brickell Avenue, suite 1130 Miami, FL 33131 Tel: 1.305.358.1992 Fax: 1.305.358.8223 e-mail: miami@tourspain.es
666 Fifth Avenue, 35th floor New York, NY 10103 Tel: 1.212.265.8822 Fax: 1.212.265.8864 e-mail: nuevayork@tourspain.es www.okspain.org

POSTMARK///

Barcelona



m ropolis on the Mediterranean

Along with London, Paris, and Rome, cosmopolitan Barcelona has emerged as one of Europe's must-see cities. Also an ideal jumping-off point to explore the fascinating region of Catalonia, this cultural capital draws lovers of art and architecture, food and music, modernism and the sea.

Beyond these virtues, Barcelona's history has long been part of its appeal. Its **Gothic Quarter** (or Barri Gòtic) is perhaps Europe's best-preserved medieval district, and portions of it even date back to the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus in the first century B.C. The charmingly preserved historic center houses the fourteenth-century **Barcelona Cathedral**, as well as the royal palace where Columbus was received by Ferdinand and Isabella upon his return from his first trip to America. Nearby cultural institutions include the **Picasso Museum**. The creative genius of native sons Joan Miró and Salvador Dali further underscores the passion and intellect of the Catalan spirit.

Yet it is the bold Art Nouveau works of Catalonia's premier architect Antonio Gaudí constructed a century ago that give the city its inimitable profile. From the ornate **Palau Güell**, just off Las Ramblas, the city's famous shopping promenade, to the epic, sinuous, albeit unfinished **Sagrada Familia** temple in the Eixample that can be seen for miles—Gaudí's artistry is synonymous with Barcelona.

Travelers savor twenty-first century Barcelona in its tapas restaurants where *cava*—Catalonia's sparkling wine—flows, and along the city's exciting new waterfront.

Montjuïc, one of Barcelona's famous hills, has been transformed into a popular destination thanks to distinctive museums—including the **National Art Museum of Catalonia** and **Fundació Joan Miró**—along with numerous galleries, night clubs, an open-air theatre, parkland, and the stadium and sports facilities used during the 1992 Olympics.

Sophisticated Barcelona welcomes guests at outstanding five-star hotels. The **Gran Hotel La Florida,** which first opened in 1925, recently underwent a nearly fifty-million-dollar transformation. One of the finest hotels in Europe, **Hotel Arts Barcelona,** is a contemporary Ritz-Carlton property boasting unsurpassed views of the city and the sparkling Mediterranean Sea beyond.

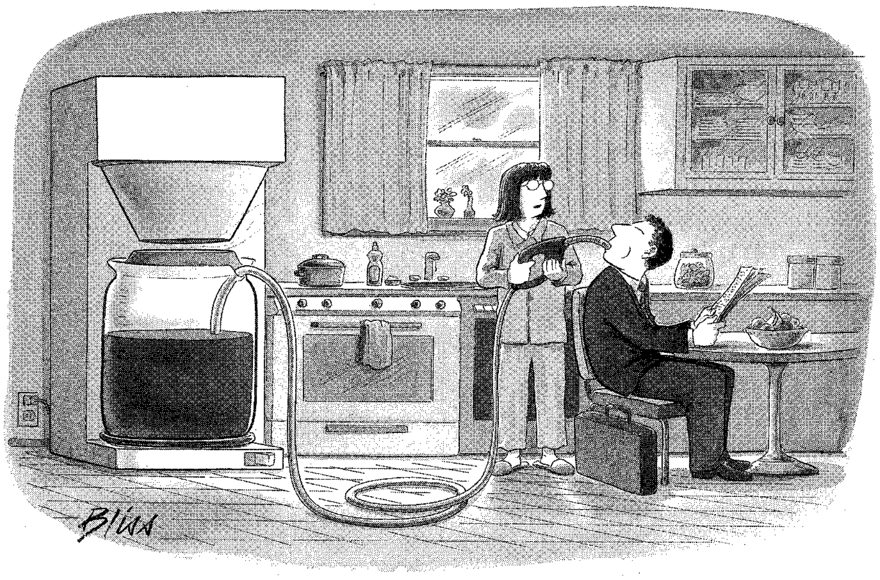
THEN AND NOW. *The Catalonia region that includes Barcelona is bordered by the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean. Secluded coves, fishing villages, and luxe resorts dot the rugged **Costa Brava**. The river town of **Girona** is lined with pastel-hued buildings; its fifteenth-century cathedral in the old quarter is known for its massive Gothic nave, the widest in the history of the architectural style. Once key to the Roman Empire, **Osona's** preserved sixteenth-century baroque university and some exquisite mansions are must-visits for travelers. **Vic** (Osona's capital), once colonized by the Romans, boasts a second-century temple's remains along with thirty-five other churches. Today, it may be better known for its lively, twice-weekly market, held in a square surrounded by Gothic arches—a charming setting for many a chic bar and café.*

Six routes allow travelers to plan an exploration of Catalonia's vast trove of art and architecture. For details, go to okspain.org.

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: CALA SA TUNA, COSTA BRAVA ©ROLAND GERTH/ZEFA/CORBIS; GAUDI'S CASA MILA ©OLIVIA BERNARD

Visit SPAIN.INFO when planning your next trip.

an experimental drug for thousands of patients in an expanded-access program is hugely expensive, and there is no guarantee that the F.D.A. will ultimately approve the drug for sale.)



"Say when."

Doctors, too, got swept up in the campaign to distribute experimental drugs. I began treating patients with AIDS in 1981, and for more than a decade I watched helplessly as they grew sicker and died. In 1994, saquinavir, the first anti-H.I.V. protease inhibitor, was tested in clinical trials. In test-tube experiments, the compounds were remarkably potent in preventing the virus from multiplying, and studies on rodents suggested that they were relatively safe; the only known side effect was liver damage, and then only at very high doses. Word of the inhibitors' promise spread rapidly through the AIDS community, and, like many doctors, I was eager to get the drugs to my patients as quickly as possible, by enrolling them in clinical trials. Hoffman-LaRoche, the company that made saquinavir, invited several physicians at my hospital to run one of the trials, and four slots in the study were reserved for patients from my practice. I agonized about which names to submit. Some of my patients were expected to die within weeks, and yet I thought it was possible that the drug would help them. Others, who appeared healthier, had abnormal blood-test results—including elevated levels of liver enzymes—which were likely to disqualify them, so I repeated the tests in a vain effort to obtain values in the normal range. Heartsick, I eventually submitted the names of twenty patients to the nurse in charge of administering the trial, believing that they were the most likely to be accepted. Most of the rest had no chance of being admitted, because they had serious infections, such as cytomegalovirus and systemic cryptococcus (a fungus).

Tom (a pseudonym), a physician living near Boston, belonged to this group. He had developed a cytomegalovirus infection in his retina and was slowly going blind, but each time he visited the clinic he pressed me for information about saquinavir and asked me to tell him when the clinical trial would begin. His father begged me to persuade Hoffman-LaRoche to bend its rules and admit Tom. I said that I would try but had little hope of succeeding, explaining that the trial was designed to assess the drug's safety, and if Tom's vision got worse while he was taking the protease inhibitor we would have to report it to the drug company as an "adverse event." Although we might suspect the infection of his retina to be the cause, Hoffman-LaRoche would have to list "declining vision"—and the F.D.A. would have to consider it—as a possible side effect of the drug.

Saquinavir proved to be strikingly effective against H.I.V. Within a few months, the immune systems of most patients who had taken the drug improved and the amount of H.I.V. in their bodies decreased. They gained weight, and had fewer infections. Tom, who had been denied admission to the trial, soon lost his sight and, not surprisingly, became clinically depressed. I assured him that I would make every effort to see that he did not suffer. He developed seizures, and a brain scan revealed a large mass with the characteristics of a lymphoma. He refused further treatment, was placed on a morphine drip at home, and died with his family at his bedside.

At the time, newspapers were filled with stories of AIDS patients whose lives had been saved by the protease inhibitors. It was later discovered that the drugs caused significant side effects in some patients, including an increased risk of diabetes and elevated cholesterol, but, when used with other anti-viral drugs, protease inhibitors helped reduce the death rate from AIDS in the United States by at least seventy per cent. It is possible that Tom would still be alive if he had been able to take saquinavir.

In the case of other experimental AIDS drugs, however, doctors' expectations were tragically misplaced. In 1980, I spent ten months on a fellowship at U.C.L.A., collaborating with other researchers on a project to purify gamma interferon, a naturally occurring protein made by immune cells. Many scientists had a near-mystical regard for gamma interferon, believing that it could help the immune system defeat infections, as well as cancer. Our laboratory succeeded in purifying a small amount of gamma interferon—the first step toward developing a drug—and we published our results in *Nature* in 1982. Not long afterward, Genentech, a biotechnology company, announced that it had created a synthetic version of the protein and was planning to conduct clinical trials. In 1984, after I had returned to Boston, I helped run a trial of gamma interferon for AIDS patients who had Kaposi's sarcoma, a cancer that causes large lesions on the skin and, in many cases, respiratory failure and internal bleeding. Gamma interferon appeared to be the ideal treatment for these patients. It had been shown to have powerful anti-viral effects in test-tube studies and to reduce the size of tumors in rodents.

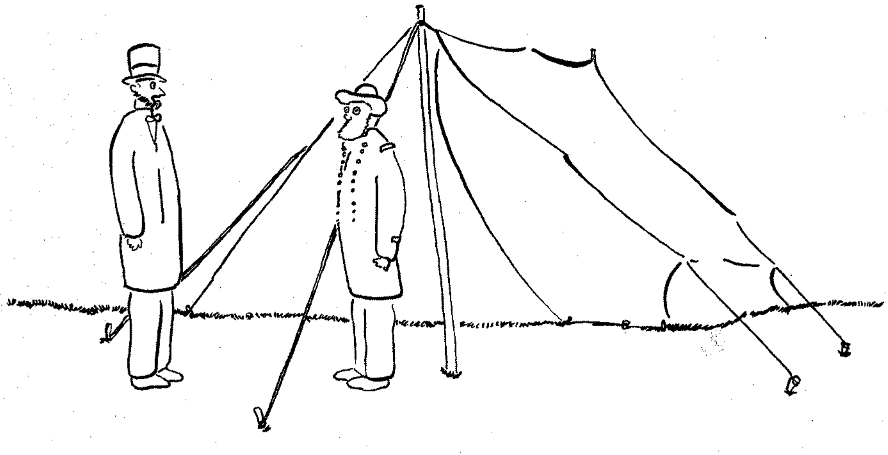
I enthusiastically told my AIDS patients about the trial, including George (also a pseudonym), who had recently moved to Boston to be with his partner. George was in reasonably good health; he had not developed any serious infections, and his Kaposi's-sarcoma lesions were mostly on his chest and arms. The goal of the trial was to test the effects of different doses of gamma interferon, and George belonged to the group that received the largest dose. Like many participants, he experienced unpleasant side effects—fevers, muscle pain, and headaches—but he was determined to finish the trial. After six weeks, however, new lesions appeared on his skin and in his mouth, and a chest X-ray suggested that the cancer had spread to his lungs. George was not the only patient who grew sicker on gamma interferon. None of the patients improved, and in at least four cases we believed that the therapy had hastened the tumors' growth. Ultimately, the trial was judged a failure. (Gamma interferon has since proved effective in treating children with a rare immune-system disorder called chronic granulomatous disease.) George reluctantly agreed to undergo chemotherapy, which had little effect. He returned to California, where his family lived, and died five months later. (Although I continue to conduct basic research, I currently have no consulting relationships with pharmaceutical companies whose drugs are under review for approval by the F.D.A.)

If Congress passes Brownback's bill, or the D.C. circuit court's opinion in Abigail Alliance is upheld, there will doubtless be more cases like George's. Brownback told me that the goal of his bill is to "get more testing of treatments and options available in the system for cancer patients, much as we did during the AIDS crisis." However, AIDS is caused by a virus whose presence in the body can be measured by a simple blood test, and is thus much easier to monitor than cancer. Lung cancer, one of the most common forms of the disease, encompasses a dozen different kinds of tumors; a given drug is likely to help only a small subset of patients, and it is often impossible to predict which ones. Nevertheless, Brownback's bill would grant conditional approval of experimental drugs that have completed Phase I or Phase II testing, based on preliminary evidence—from test-tube experiments, animal studies, computer simulations, and individual patients—that they might be beneficial and safe. "If the potential risk to a patient of the condition or disease outweighs the potential risk of the product, and the product may possibly provide benefit to the patient," the bill asserts, then the F.D.A. is obligated to approve the drug if a physician and a patient request it. (The new law would coexist with the current system: if an experimental drug approved under the scheme did not win F.D.A. approval at the end of Phase III trials, it would no longer be distributed.)

Brownback's bill would grant access to experimental drugs to patients with "serious or life-threatening" illnesses; the decision in Abigail Alliance limits such access to patients who have terminal diseases. In both instances, patients would be taking drugs whose risks and benefits are largely unknown. "We all know that Phase I testing doesn't prove that a drug is safe enough," Sonia Suter, a professor of law at George Washington University and an expert in medical ethics, told me. "There are very small numbers of participants in Phase I, and they are treated for a very limited period of time. So if you believe that there is this constitutional right, that there are risks you are willing to take and not have the government interfere, why have a cutoff at Phase I? Why not just say, 'Any drug I'm willing to take,' because of some anecdotal experience, or some animal study, or the molecular structure, is reason to think the drug might work?"

In June, F.D.A. lawyers, in an attempt to have the decision in Abigail Alliance reversed, asked that the entire panel of judges on the D.C. circuit court hear the case en banc. The request was granted last month; the full court will hear the case next year. Many constitutional-law scholars believe that the opinion is flawed and that the case could eventually go before the Supreme Court. In the opinion, the circuit-court judges cite the case of Nancy Cruzan, a young woman who had suffered brain death after a car accident and whose parents were seeking legal permission to disconnect her from life support. In 1989, the case went before the Supreme Court, which ruled that patients have a right to decline medical treatment. (With regard to Cruzan, however, the Court said that her parents had not demonstrated "clear and convincing evidence" that she would prefer to die than to be sustained on life support. Several of Cruzan's friends later testified about her wishes in a lower court, and Cruzan's feeding tube was eventually removed.) The judges in Abigail Alliance reasoned that the same right of self-determination that allows someone to refuse treatment allows him to "choose to use potentially life-saving investigational new drugs." They pointed out that for "over half of our Nation's history"—until the passage, in 1906, of the Pure Food and Drug Act, which made it a crime to sell mislabelled or adulterated medicines—"a person could obtain access to any new drug without any government interference whatsoever."

"This is the kind of case that you see tugging at people's heartstrings," Ira Lupu, a professor of constitutional law at George Washington University, said. "Everyone has a friend or a sibling or, es-



"Should I free the gays, too?"

pecially, a child who has a fatal illness. You think they're going to die in three to six months anyway, so giving them a drug is their only hope. You can see that the sympathies attached to this could push a judge who is otherwise quite disciplined over the edge." By relying on the Cruzan decision, Lupu said, the D.C. circuit court "walks away from a long-standing aspect of common law: touching somebody without his consent is a battery. The Supreme Court assumes, in Cruzan, that the right to refuse continued treatment is a constitutional right, because it is based on the long-standing right to be protected from battery. As a matter of philosophy, it may seem to make sense that if you can refuse treatment you can also have access to treatment. But, from the perspective of constitutional law, it is very hard to see what platform this court is standing on."

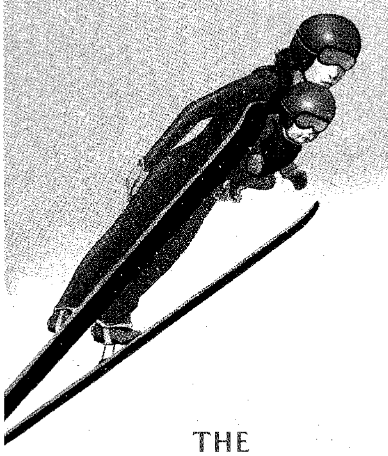
Even if the D.C. circuit-court decision survives legal challenges or Brownback's bill passes, neither gives pharmaceutical companies any incentive to make experimental drugs widely available. Under the existing regulations, only once a drug is approved does the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services decide whether it will be covered by Medicare, and private insurance companies usually follow the government's lead in determining which drugs to cover. Brownback's bill could be amended to require the government to reimburse companies for the costs of experimental drugs, but they would still face daunting practical and financial obstacles. Richard Merrill, a professor at the University of Virginia Law School and a prominent expert on drug regulation, said that Brownback's legislation "would require a major investment to scale up production of an experimental drug"—after treating only a few hundred patients in Phase I and Phase II trials—"and it would not be at all clear that the drug had a good chance of ultimately being widely marketed, because its safety and efficacy could prove problematic in more extensive human testing."

Brownback's bill stipulates that drug companies cannot be held liable for a patient's adverse reactions to an experimental medication. But this may not be enough to reassure pharmaceutical companies, and it could inadvertently encourage retailers of alternative therapies that have little or no basis in science. "The bill opens the space for products that are sold by charlatans," said David Parkinson, an oncologist who worked at the National Cancer Institute for many years and is now a senior vice-president at the biotech company Biogen Idec. One of Parkinson's tasks at the N.C.I. was to evaluate herbal remedies and animal extracts, such as shark cartilage, that are sold in health-food stores and on the Internet, accompanied by testimonials from patients about their anti-cancer benefits. Some of these products could pass Phase I trials, Parkinson said, and, under Brownback's bill, the F.D.A. would be compelled to approve them.

In March, the F.D.A. approved the use of a drug called Gemzar, in combination with a standard chemotherapy medicine, as a treatment for recurrent ovarian cancer. The agency's Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee, a group of cancer doctors and statisticians, had voted, nine to two, against approving the treatment, on the ground that it didn't significantly improve the survival rate of patients. In July, Richard Pazdur, the director of the F.D.A.'s Office of Oncology Drug Products, issued a statement defending the agency's decision to overrule the committee. He cited data from Gemzar's manufacturer, Eli Lilly, showing that patients who were given the drug as part of their chemotherapy regimens had longer periods of remission than patients who did not take the drug. "Although improvement in overall survival remains the gold standard," Pazdur wrote, "delay in disease progression" has been advocated as a "surrogate" for clinical benefit in cancer patients.

Many cancer doctors saw the F.D.A.'s decision as evidence that the agency is willing to adapt to patients' needs. When I spoke to Pazdur, he mentioned this—and the agency's recent approval of similar drugs for kidney cancer (Nexavar), multiple myeloma (Revlimid), and a rare gastrointestinal tumor (Sutent). "We need to be more flexible in how we evaluate drugs for patients like this," Pazdur said. "The provision is that the drug's benefits have to be clinically meaningful—and it doesn't mean delaying the progression of the tumor by two days—so you're not approving iffy drugs."

Pazdur said that the F.D.A. has



Advertisement

THE
NEW YORKER
HUMOR
on the slopes

at Beaver Creek

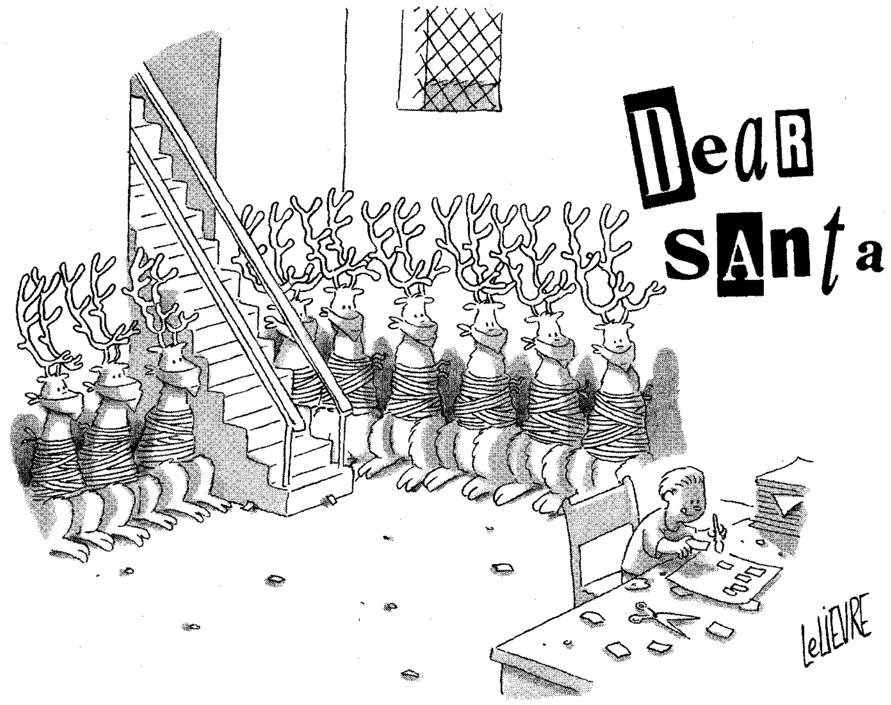
February
23•24•25

Featuring
Dennis Miller

Need a lift this winter? Join the laughter in Beaver Creek, Colorado. On the last weekend in February, the *New Yorker* Promotion Department's Humor on the Slopes event fills the famed destination with three days of highly elevated comedy. Resort to laughter with performances by comedians including Dennis Miller, appearances by *New Yorker* cartoonists, a comedy-film sneak preview, and much more.

For lift/lodging packages and non-stop-flight details, visit www.humorontheslopes.com, or call 888-812-6409.

Beaver Creek.
Not exactly roughing it.



• •

rarely denied a patient's request to obtain an experimental drug under the compassionate-use provision. (He recalled only one instance in which the agency has done so: in the case of a boy with a brain tumor whose parents had refused to give him radiation therapy, the standard treatment for his condition. "That's not a regulatory issue; that was bad medicine," Pazdur said.) He also cited a recent program—modelled on the expanded-access programs for AIDS patients in the eighties—in which the drug Iressa was given to more than twenty-four thousand lung-cancer patients after a Phase II trial yielded promising results. (Ultimately, Iressa was not approved; few patients in Phase III trials improved on the drug, and its use is now restricted to those patients.) Nevertheless, Pazdur acknowledged that pharmaceutical companies currently have little motivation to comply with requests for experimental drugs. "There are some companies that flat out refuse to even get involved in expanded access," he said. "We are told over and over by the industry that the F.D.A. will find some toxicity in the expanded-access program, and the evil Dr. Pazdur will take out his ruler and slap your hand, and the drug will be killed."

Pazdur is overseeing the F.D.A.'s plans for a new program that will enable pharmaceutical companies to distribute experimental drugs to thousands of cancer patients through large networks of community-based oncologists. To be eligible for the program, drugs would have to be at the end of Phase II trials or partway through Phase III, depending on the kind of drug and cancer involved. The oncologists who administer the drugs would be required to report their patients' progress and any side effects to the F.D.A. and to the pharmaceutical companies. The doctors would also have to answer simple questions about the drug—whether patients did better on a high dose twice a day or on a lower dose three times a day, say, or whether it helped patients with an advanced stage of cancer.

To encourage drug companies to participate, the F.D.A. would allow them to recover some of the program's costs, including a portion of the doctors' fees, from patients or insurance companies. But the data generated by doctors and patients could prove equally lucrative. The knowledge that a drug works just as well taken twice rather than three times a day—information that might not be obtained in a Phase III trial—could make it easier to market. Similarly, knowing that a drug helps patients with advanced cancer—the kind of severely ill patients who are generally excluded from clinical trials—could enable a company to obtain broader approval for the drug from the F.D.A. and increase revenues by hundreds of millions of dollars.

The program could also save pharmaceutical companies equally large sums in marketing costs. It is against the law to promote a drug to physicians before it has been approved by the F.D.A., but it is perfectly legal for pharmaceutical companies to provide information about such a drug to a doctor in an agency-approved expanded-access program. Many oncologists tend to be wary of prescribing new medications, because anti-cancer drugs usually cause serious side effects. The more rapidly a doctor can be educated about a drug's toxicity and proper dosing, the less money the pharmaceutical company will need to spend to promote the therapy and the greater the likelihood that the doctors will continue to use it.

The F.D.A. is also proposing to make clinical trials more efficient by adapting them while they are in progress. In a traditional trial, an experimental cancer drug would be tested in a group of lung-cancer patients with different types of the disease, in the expectation that perhaps fifteen to twenty per cent might benefit. An "adaptive trial" might begin with a heterogeneous group and then add patients with a particular type of the disease, as data from outside the trial emerged suggesting that they would be most likely to benefit. "Whenever it comes to discussions about the F.D.A. using adaptive clinical trials to be more efficient, critics say, 'Oh, the F.D.A. is cutting corners,' " Scott Gottlieb, the deputy commissioner, told me. "But it is really about the F.D.A. using better science and better technology." Moreover, he added, "there's a real difference between assessing the safety of drugs like Vioxx, for arthritis, and drugs for patients with life-threatening diseases. What might be considered too risky for an arthritis patient could be an acceptable risk for a cancer patient."

In early November, Frank Burroughs, of the Abigail Alliance, met with Andrew von Eschenbach and seventeen other senior officials at the F.D.A. The officials did not mention the new initiatives, but after the meeting Burroughs told me, "For the first time in five years, I felt we were heard, that Dr. von Eschenbach is forward-thinking about our position." Under the program for cancer patients being developed by the F.D.A., both Abigail Burroughs and Kianna Karnes would have been able to obtain the experimental drugs they sought. Still, the program is unlikely to satisfy those who believe that people with a terminal illness have a right to take any drug under development without government interference. "The Abigail Alliance holds to the position that the decisions about experimental drugs should rest with the patient and his physician," Burroughs said.

At the same time, critics who believe that the F.D.A. needs stricter drug regulations are likely to consider the program too radical, and it may not altogether please pharmaceutical companies, either. If many patients with different kinds of tumors started taking experimental drugs outside controlled clinical trials, doctors could have a hard time discerning which of the drugs were working and for which cancers. "The signal-to-noise ratio would be very low if we allowed experimental drugs to be widely distributed," David Parkinson, of Biogen Idec, said. As a result, he speculated, some drug companies might be inclined to abandon cancer research. "Many people think cancer is a lucrative market, but it really isn't when you factor in the risks, since so many experimental agents fail at the stage of Phase III testing," Parkinson said. "There are only a few real blockbuster drugs in cancer treatment, and a businessman can take a conservative approach and reap considerable revenues from developing another statin for high cholesterol, or another anti-hypertensive for elevated blood pressure. When I go to upper management, I have to convince them that it's worth investing hundreds of millions of dollars in an experimental cancer agent that may well fail. With a new approval system that would make it difficult to identify effective drugs, the risk rises considerably, and this will shift investment from oncology to other areas where the developmental process is well defined and much less risky."

Moreover, the F.D.A.'s initiatives could make it more difficult to recruit patients for clinical trials. Only three per cent of cancer patients in the United States are enrolled in such trials, which are typically conducted at academic medical centers. (Many American drug companies, unable to recruit sufficient numbers of patients, have begun to conduct Phase III trials in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, where such studies may be the only way to receive treatment.) If patients can obtain experimental drugs from physicians in their communities, they would have little reason to leave home to participate in a trial. Enrollments are particularly likely to suffer in the case of trials comparing an experimental drug with a standard therapy: what patient would want to risk receiving the standard treatment in a trial when he could get the experimental drug directly from his doctor? "Trying to make progress in cancer should be done by professionals, not by hoping that through this process somehow wonderful drugs should emerge," Parkinson said of the agency's plan to give experimental drugs to patients through community oncologists. "I would venture to say that responsible pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies will react to this as a terrible idea."

Ultimately, the F.D.A. is proposing a national experiment. The goal—to deliver experimental drugs to seriously ill patients who otherwise would probably not be able to obtain them—is a worthy one, but, as in a clinical trial, it entails considerable risks. If some version of the Brownback bill, the D.C. circuit-court decision, or, more likely, the F.D.A.'s plan is eventually adopted, the agency will need to be more involved in the oversight of drugs early in the approval process. It will have to develop new techniques for evaluating data from Phase I and Phase II trials in order to predict with greater accuracy which medications are likely to benefit which patients and when they should be distributed. In short, deregulation of experimental drugs will require new forms of regulation in order to insure that patients like Abigail Burroughs and Kianna Karnes are helped, not harmed. As Richard Merrill, the University of Virginia law professor, put it, "The agency won't just be calling balls and strikes but will be taking some initiative. It's not necessarily a mistake to go in this direction, but it will require a commitment to intervene that is unprecedented." ♦

Ben Thylan furs

ALL WEATHER POPLIN COAT

Snap in / snap out fur, cashmere or quilted liner; natural ranch mink trim. Available in fabrics of your choice.

Please call for an appointment: (212) 753-7700

345 Seventh Avenue • 5th Floor • New York 10001
www.benthylanfurs.com

ODD, I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE *with* MY GIN!

HENDRICK'S GIN

HENDRICK'S

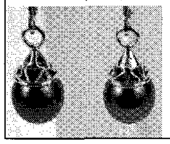
A MOST UNUSUAL GIN

"Voted Best Gin in The World."—*Wall Street Journal, August 29, 2003*

©2006 IMPORTED BY WILLIAM GRANT & SONS INC., NEW YORK, NY 10118. 44% ALC. BY VOL. (88 PROOF). DRINK THE UNUSUAL RESPONSIBLY.

REAL TAHITIANS!

Beautiful Tahitian Pearl Earrings



14k White Gold, Lever Backs

Only $119!

Free Priority Shipping

www.PearlGuys.com

877-327-5489

STRUCTURE HOUSE™

a renowned facility and community for weight loss, diabetes management, and lifestyle change

www.structurehouse.com • 1.800.553.0052

SHOUTS & MURMURS

ASK THE OPTIMIST!

BY GEORGE SAUNDERS

Dear Optimist:

My husband, who knows very well that I love nothing more than wearing bonnets, recently bought a convertible. He's always doing "passive-aggressive" things like this. Like once, after I had all my teeth pulled, he bought a big box of Cracker Jacks. Another time, when I had very serious burns over ninety per cent of my body, he tricked me into getting a hot-oil massage, then tripped me so that I fell into a vat of hydrochloric acid. I've long since forgiven him for these "misunderstandings," but, tell me, is there a way I can be "optimistic" about this "bonnet" situation?

Mad Due to No More Bonnets
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Mad:

You can still wear bonnets while riding in a convertible! You will just need to have more of them to start with! What I recommend? Buy a large number of bonnets, place them in the car, begin driving! When one blows off, put on another from your enormous stockpile! And just think of all the happiness you will create in your wake, as people who cannot afford bonnets scurry after your convertible, collecting your discards! Super!

Dear Optimist:

Upon returning from vacation, we found our home totally full of lemons. I mean totally. The cat even had one in its mouth. What do you recommend?

Sourpuss
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Sourpuss:

That is a tough one! What I recommend is, when life gives you lemons: (1) Buy a bunch of Hefty bags! (2) Fill the Hefty bags with lemons! (3) Lug the bags to the curb! And (4) Call a certified waste-disposal contractor to haul away the pile of lemons now rotting in the sun! Before long, like magic, your home will be lemon-free—and you can celebrate by going out and having something cold to drink! And don't forget to give Kitty a jaw massage!

Dear Optimist:

My wife is a terrific artist—except when it comes to me! Whenever she paints me, my legs are half the length of my torso, my face looks like the face of a frog, my feet are splayed outward unattractively like the feet of some hideous reptile, and I have a smug, pinched look on my face. Anyone else she paints, they look exactly like themselves. I pretend not to notice, but recently, at my wife's one-woman show, I could tell our friends were discussing this, and I felt embarrassed. How might I have taken this in a more optimistic way?

Hurt But Hopeful
Topeka, Kans.

Dear Hurt But:

After receiving your letter, I sent a private investigator to your home with a camera! And guess what! Have you looked in the mirror lately? Your legs are squat, you have the face of a frog, your feet are reptilian, and you do look smug and pinched! So not to worry! Your wife is a terrific artist!

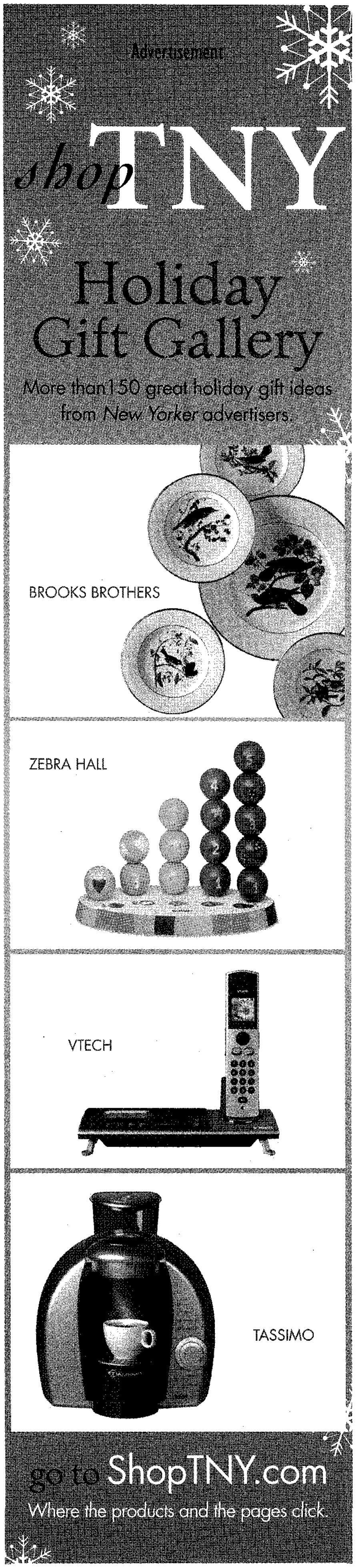
Dear Optimist:

When I go to the zoo, I feel so sad. All those imprisoned animals sitting in their own feces. What do you suggest?

Animal Lover
Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Animal:

What I suggest is, stop going to the zoo! But, should you find yourself tricked into going to a zoo, think about it as follows: All those animals, coated with their own poop, pacing dry grass-



Advertisement
shop TNY
Holiday Gift Gallery
More than 150 great holiday gift ideas from *New Yorker* advertisers.
BROOKS BROTHERS
ZEBRA HALL
VTECH
TASSIMO
go to ShopTNY.com
Where the products and the pages click.

less trenches in their "enclosures," have natural predators, and might very well be dead if they were still in the wild! So ask yourself: Would I rather be dead, or coated in my own poop, repetitively pacing a dry grassless trench? I certainly know what *my* answer would be!

Dear Optimist:

A few years ago, I inadvertently declared war on the wrong country. Also, I perhaps responded a little slowly to a terrible natural disaster. Also, those of my friends who are not under indictment seem to be deserting me. Also, the organization of which I am in charge is all of a sudden facing a huge crushing debt. And I still have almost two years left in my job. Advice?
In Somewhat Over My Head
Washington, D.C.

Dear In Somewhat:

Stay the course! Admit to nothing! Disparage your enemies! Perhaps declare another war? Do you have any openings in your Cabinet? Sounds like you could use a little Optimism! What would you pay? Have your people call my people!

Dear Optimist:

Recently, my wife left me for another man. Not only that, the other man was bigger, better-looking, and richer than me, and—at least according to my wife—better-endowed and with a nicer singing voice and less back hair. To tell the truth, I am feeling somewhat "pessimistic" about this situation. Advice?
Depressed Because My Penis Is Smaller, Relative to That of My Wife's New and More Handsome Lover
Brighton, Mich.

Dear Small-Penis:

Why not try to look on the bright side! At least he is not more articulate than you—

Dear Optimist:

Oh, yes, he is. I forgot that.

Dear Small-Penis:

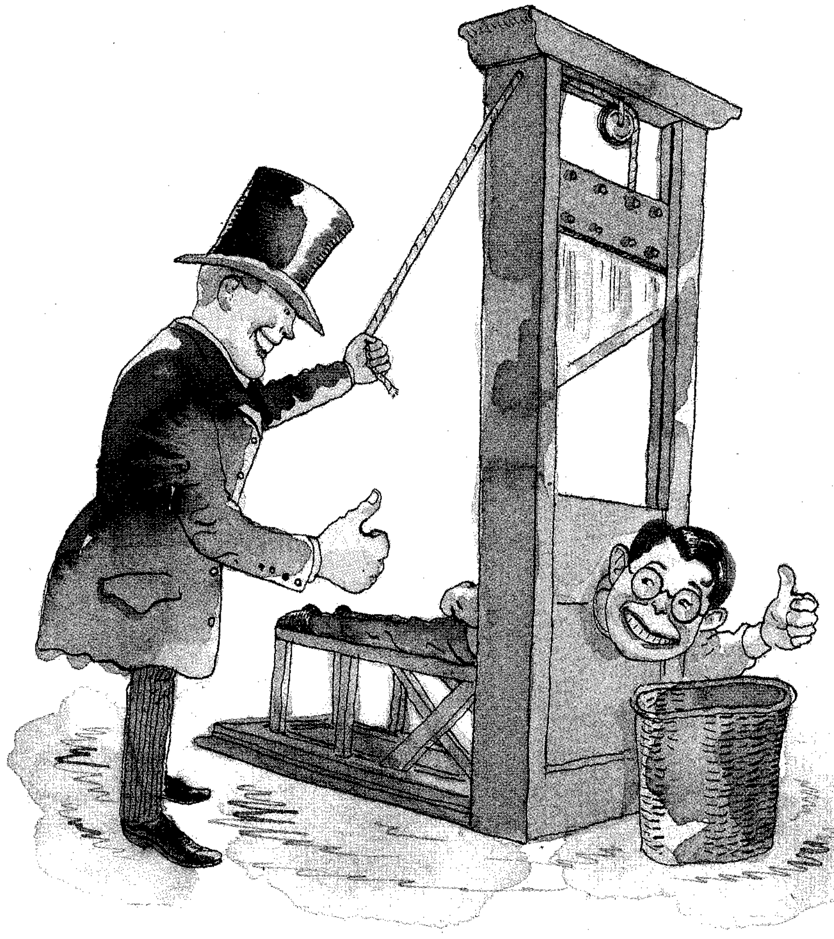
No worries! I believe in you! She is clearly not the right woman for you, and by accepting this—

Dear Optimist:

Actually, Ralph speaks five languages and is just finishing up a translation from the Sanskrit of an ancient text on social deportment. And Judy is the right woman for me, I just know it. I could never love anyone else. I'd rather die.

Dear Small-Penis:

Wow, no wonder she left you! You are so negative! Also somewhat pigheaded!



BARRY BLITT

Dear Optimist:

I know, right? That's exactly what Judy always said. Oh, what's the point of living anymore? I'm just going to take these fast-acting suicide pills and . . . and . . . and . . .

Dear Small-Penis:

You know, Small-Penis, you don't seem to understand Optimism at all! What is the essential quality of the Optimist? He is non-Pessimistic! What is the essential quality of the Pessimist? He thinks too much, then gets all depressed and paralyzed! Like you, Small-Penis! Me, I prefer to think as little as possible and stay peppy! Peppy and active! If something is bothering me, I think of something else! If someone tells me some bad news? I ignore it! Like, I knew this one guy, very Optimistic, who was being eaten by a shark and did not even scream but just kept shouting, "It's all for the best!" Now, that was an Optimist! In the end, he was just as dead, but he hadn't brought everybody else down! What a great guy! I really miss him! No, I don't! It's all good! I don't miss Todd at all, even though we were briefly lovers and I've never felt so completely inhabited, if you know what I mean! So *valued!* But no biggie! I'm certainly not going to start moping about it! Right? Right, Small-Penis? Hello! Oh, well, I guess he's off moping somewhere! Next letter!

Dear Optimist:

I am an emaciated single mother living in a vast famine-affected region with my four starving children. Rebels frequently sweep down from the hills with automatic weapons and kill many of us and violate and abuse the others. All our men are dead or have been driven away, and there is no food or

fresh water to be had. I would be very appreciative of any advice you might be able to offer us.
Not Altogether Hopeful
Africa

Dear Hopeful:
Thanks so much for writing! Perhaps it would be of some consolation for me to tell you what a vast minority you are in! There are, relative to the world's population, very few people "in your boat"! Most of the rest of us are not starving or in danger, and, in fact, many of us do not even know that *you* are starving and in danger, and are just out here leading rich, rewarding lives, having all kinds of fun! Does that help? I hope so! And remember—trouble can't last forever! Soon, I expect, your difficulties will be over!

Dear Optimist:
Recently, my father-in-law backed over me with his car. When I complained, he backed over me again. When, from beneath the wheels of his car, I complained again, he got out of his vehicle, poured molten metal over me, hauled me to a public park, mounted me on a pedestal, and placed at my feet a plaque reading "SLOTH." What gives? I am trying to think about this incident in an optimistic way but am having some difficulties, as my chin itches and I am unable to reach it with my bronze-encrusted arms.
I Love Parks but, Hey, This Is Ridiculous
Fort Myers, Fla.

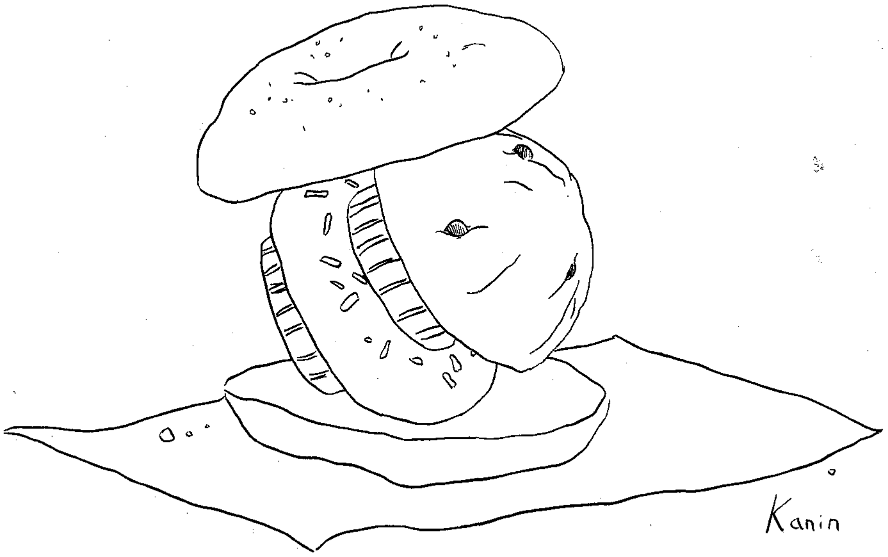
Dear Loves Parks:
Oh, really? Bronze-encrusted arms? Then how did you write that letter?

Dear Optimist:
Uh, one of my arms is not totally bronze-encrusted?

Dear Loves Parks:
Then why don't you scratch your chin with that arm?

Dear Optimist:
Uh, because I am holding my pen in that hand? And if I drop the pen I will not be able to bend to retrieve it, because my torso is totally encrusted in bronze? And the pigeons will, like, run away with the pen? Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't you suggest I *kill* myself? With fast-acting suicide pills, after first calling me "negative" and "pigheaded"?

Dear Loves Parks:
Is that you, Small-Penis? I thought the handwriting was similar! Were you faking it just now when you said you were taking those pills? And you're not really encrusted in bronze at all, are you?



A MUFFIN IN A DONUT IN A BAGEL.

Dear Optimist:
That's right, genius, I am *not* dead and *not* encrusted in bronze and am *not* giving up and in fact am going to go and try to get Judy on the phone right now. If she'll just *listen* to me, then I know she'll—

Dear Optimist:
I am a man trapped in a turkey's body. I have dim memories of my life as a human. But then I look down, and there are my wattles! Sometimes when it rains I find myself gazing up at the sky, mouth open, gullet slowly filling with rain. I'm really starting to feel bad about myself. Can you help?
Chagrined Gobbler
A Farm Near Albany

Dear Gobbler:
Of course I can help! Come to my house for some private counselling! Does Christmas work for you? Wait for me at the "waiting spot," a tree stump with an axe leaning against it! And do you happen to know a human trapped in a pig's body? I can also counsel him! Until then, I suggest eating as much as you can, preferably some high-quality corn! And keep your chin up, or your wattles up, or whatever!

Dear Optimist:
I was buried alive during the Eighteenth Century when I experienced a fit of narcolepsy and my family mistook my deep sleep for Death. In the two hundred and fifty-six years since, trapped in my moldering Body by the terrifying circumstances of my departure from this Life, my Soul has longed for freedom. And yet everyone who once would have prayed for me has long since gone on to Eternity, and I, desperately lonely, am haunted by the scuffing feet of dog-walkers and the skittering of leaves in Autumn, doomed to exist in this semi-death forever, in a perpetual state of mild Terror, until Time itself shall end and our Creator returns to redeem us all. Any thoughts about this?
Longing for the Sweet Peace of True Death
Plymouth, Mass.

Dear Longing:
Do you mind some "tough love"? Did they even have that in your time?

Have you honestly tried your best to get out of this situation? Have you, for example, clawed frantically at the lid of your coffin for sixty or seventy years, after which have you tried literally digging your way to the surface even though your mouth was filling with dirt and you were nearly overcome with a terrible feeling of claustrophobia? Or have you just been lying there feeling sorry for yourself all this—

Dear Optimist:

No, no, I think you misunderstand my situation. I can't move. My mind is active, I can fear and regret and dream, but I can't move at all. I guess I thought when I said "dead" I assumed you'd understand that this meant—

Dear Longing:

No sense trying to blame me! I am not the bonehead who went through life with undiagnosed narcolepsy! I didn't mistake your sleep for death! I wasn't even alive in the eighteen-hundreds or whenever! You know what? Just lie there awhile and think about what you really want!

Dear Optimist:

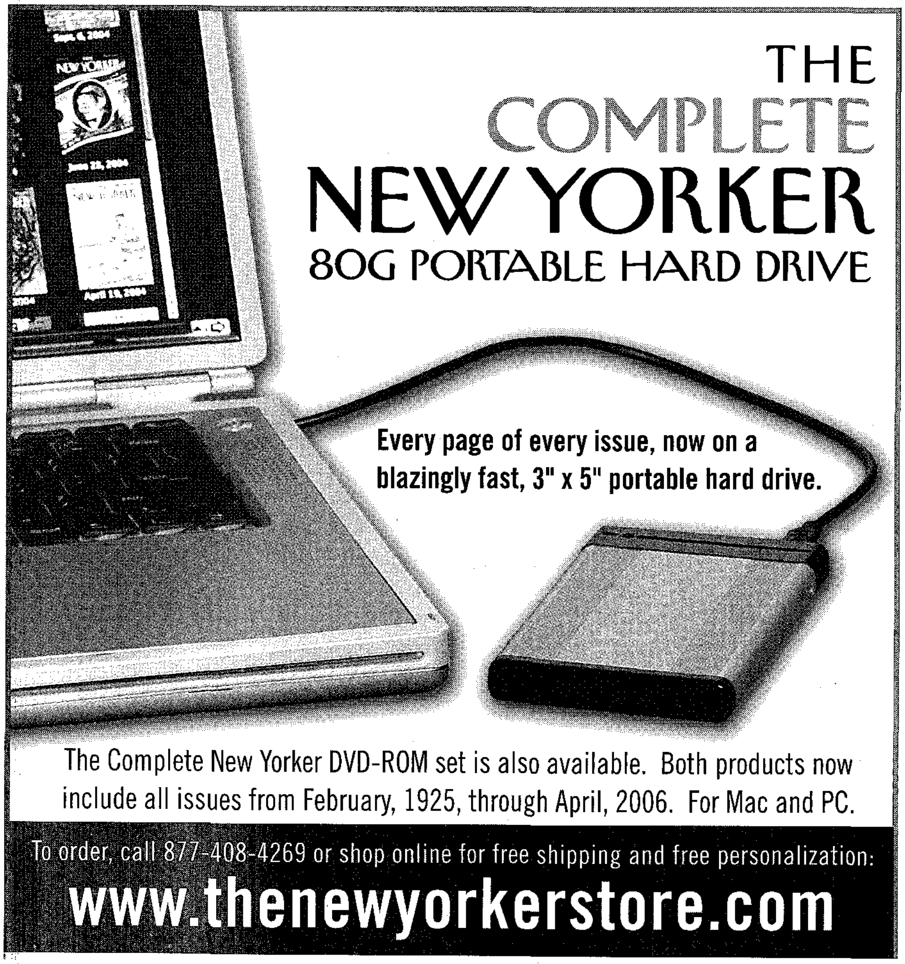
I started out life as an angel, then, through a misunderstanding, became a "fallen angel," and am now Lucifer, Master of Evil. Although I know I should be grateful—I love working for myself, and I'm one of the two most powerful beings in the universe—I sometimes feel a certain absence, as if there's some essential quality I'm lacking. I've heard people, as I make my rounds, speak of something called "goodness." Usually when I hear someone use this word I get frustrated and immediately tempt them into doing something horrific—but lately, somehow, this isn't enough. Thoughts?

Satan
Hell

Dear Satan:

Clearly you are lonely! Here's what I recommend: go visit Longing for the Sweet Peace of True Death, in his grave, in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He is lonely! You are lonely! A real win-win! Just reside with him there in his coffin awhile! I think he'll love it! Or maybe not! Maybe it will kind of scare

JUDI DENCH
CATE BLANCHETT
BILL NIGHY
ONE WOMAN'S MISTAKE IS ANOTHER'S OPPORTUNITY.
NOTES ON A SCANDAL
IN SELECT THEATRES DECEMBER 27
www.foxsearchlight.com


THE COMPLETE NEW YORKER
80G PORTABLE HARD DRIVE

Every page of every issue, now on a blazingly fast, 3" x 5" portable hard drive.

The Complete New Yorker DVD-ROM set is also available. Both products now include all issues from February, 1925, through April, 2006. For Mac and PC.

To order, call 877-408-4269 or shop online for free shipping and free personalization:
www.thenewyorkerstore.com

ADVERTISEMENT
on the town

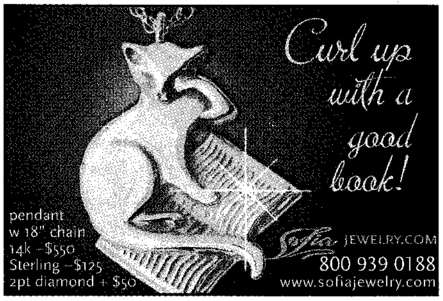
BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

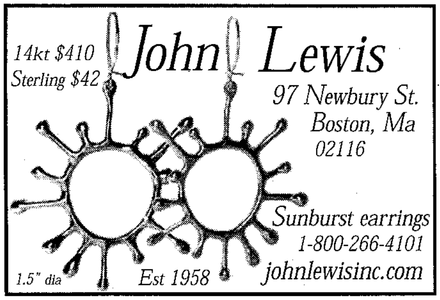
CHASING BUTTERFLIES SWEEPSTAKES

Find the hidden butterflies perched in four small space advertisements in this issue of *The New Yorker* and you may win a $500 gift certificate toward products from a select *New Yorker* advertiser.

For more information and to enter, visit www.newyorkerreaderlink.com.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter and for full rules, go to www.newyorkerreaderlink.com. Starts December 10, 2006, 12:01 A.M. E.S.T. and ends January 11, 2006, 11:59 P.M. E.S.T. Open to legal residents of the fifty United States/D.C. 18 or older, except employees of Sponsor and immediate families. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Void outside the fifty United States/D.C. and where prohibited. A.R.V. of prize $500. Sponsor: The New Yorker Promotion Department, 4 Times Square, NY, NY 10036.





Bask in our glow!
scented candles
www.jonathanadler.com

him, to have Satan suddenly arrive in his cramped little coffin! Oh, I doubt it! Whatever! It's all good!

Dear Optimist:

I am feeling so great! I have totally internalized all the wonderful things you've taught over the years, via your column! I am just so excited!

Thrilled to Be Alive, Never Felt Better
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Thrilled:

Super! Did you have a question!

Dear Optimist:

No, not really!

Dear Thrilled:

Then what the heck! What is the name of this column? Is it "Make a Statement to the Optimist"? Is it "Come Up in Here and Act All Like Mr. Perfect"? Is it—

Dear Optimist:

No problem! I totally respect what you're saying! Many apologies and I hope you have a great day! You know, actually, I am going to go sit quietly somewhere and think about what I've done, so that if I did in fact do something wrong I won't, in the future, repeat my mistake!

Thrilled

Dear Thrilled:

Jeez, what an asshole! Well, that's about all the space we have, so—

Dear Optimist:

Damn it! Judy would not take my call. This is the worst day of my life.

Small-Penis

Dear Small-Penis:

We are done here! The column is finished for the day! Do I come to your work and mess with you?!

Dear Optimist:

I don't work! And thanks very much for rubbing *that* in. You know what? I've had it with you. I'm coming straight over to your house right now. Got it? How do you feel about that, smart guy?

Small-Penis

Dear Anyone:

Please call the police! I am sure it will be fine! Oh, God, he's here! He's breaking down the door! Please call the police! Help! Help!

Dear Optimist:

How do you like that? How does that feel, Mr. Superior?

Dear Everyone:

Ouch! Ouch! Oh, God!

Dear Everyone!

It is finished. The Optimist is no more. We are, at last, free of his arrogance. And, Judy, if you're out there: size isn't everything. And articulate isn't everything, and tall isn't everything, and also, sweetie, I just had my back waxed. Give me some hope! I await your letter, darling!

Small-Penis, a.k.a. Steve

Dear Small-Penis, a.k.a. Steve:

Hi, Steve! How's it going? I'll be replacing the Optimist here at the column! Just call me the New Optimist! Super! Here's what I recommend: turn yourself in! There will be good food in jail, and time for contemplation, and, who knows, you may even, eventually, have a great spiritual revelation and pull your head out of your ass! Isn't that better than living on the lam? Judy is not taking you back, no way, and I should know! Judy is staying with me forever!

Thrilled to Be Alive, Never Felt Better,
a.k.a. the New Optimist

Dear Ralph, You Bastard!

Is that really you? You scum, you wife-stealer! Look what you've reduced me to! I am now a murderer! I murdered the Optimist! My God, the look on his face—even at the end, he was trying so hard to smile pleasantly!

Steve

Dear Steve-o:

Yup, you schmuck, it is me, Ralph! And guess what! I followed you over here! I am right outside! You'll never harass poor Judy again! I have with me a letter I've written, which I will plant on your corpse, so all the world will believe that, after killing the Optimist, you did away with yourself in a bizarre murder-suicide! You are a fool and the Optimist was a fool! If one really wants to be an Opti-

QUAIL

What the heart, unsteady and ill,
is supposed to do.
And does: fly in missing-man formation,
resettle too nearby,
then scatter to confuse,
fleeing like one who secretly wants catching.
Hides to die. But doesn't come to nothing:
ends a block of bony, vesselled ice
heaving, frostbit, in the chest.

—*Dana Goodyear*

mist, there is only one way: Win! Always win! Be superior and never lose! Slaughter your enemies and live on, so that you and only you are left to write the history books! Goodbye, Steve! Ralph rules! Here I come! Oh, you look so scared! There! I have done it! Steve is no more. I am going right home to make Optimistic love to the beautiful Judy! And from now on this column is mine! No more working at the oil-change place while trying to write my Sanskrit book on weekends!
Thrilled, a.k.a. Ralph, a.k.a. the New Optimist

Dear New Optimist:
I recently left my husband of ten years for a new man. Although I feel I basically did the right thing (my ex was small-penised and hairy-backed and not very articulate), I have to admit I feel a little guilty. What do you suggest?
Completely Happy, Almost

Dear Almost Happy:
Don't worry about it! It's all good! What I'd recommend is, as soon as your new man gets home from wherever he is right now, make love to him more ferociously than you've ever made love to anyone in your life! Show your adoration by doing things to him you never even contemplated doing with that boring loser Steve!

Dear New Optimist:
O.K.! Will do! As a matter of fact, he just rang the bell! Gotta go!
Completely Happy, All the Way
P.S.: Say, how did you know my ex-husband's name was Steve?

Dear All the Way:
Don't be so negative! That's what got you in trouble in the first place, Judy! You think too much! Just be quiet and do what I say! Follow my lead! Hail Optimism! Long live the New Optimist! Open the door, Judy, open the door, so we can begin our beautiful new life together! And don't even think of backtalking me, Missy!

Dear New Optimist:
O.K.! Super! Thanks for the advice! Come in, Ralph! God, you look flushed, and, honey, gosh, why are you holding that bludgeon?
Completely Happy, All the Way, Although Maybe Just a Little Bit Scared Now, a.k.a. Judy

Dear Judy:
There will be no problems whatsoever, Judy, *if* you simply acknowledge my absolute supremacy in a way that continually pleases me! And this is not a bludgeon! It is a bouquet of flowers! Right? Right, Judy? Well, that's all the space we have! Not that I'm complaining! See you next time! Never doubt yourself, and, if you start feeling down, castigate yourself, and, if others try to put the slightest trace of doubt in your mind, rebuke them, and, should your rebuke not alter their speech, you may bring harm to them, even unto death, and, after they have died, feel free to arrange their rictus-stiffening mouths into happy hopeful smiles! And that's an order! Believe me, you'll be doing them a favor! Just kidding! You are special!
The New Optimist ♦

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE BY CHILDREN
Stone Soup
"The New Yorker of the 8-to-13 set."
MS. MAGAZINE
"Blessings on the adult advisers of this enterprise."
THE NEW YORKER
Christmas, Hanukkah, Birthdays—
Stone Soup is a gift that brings hours of enjoyment, not just on the day it is received but throughout the year. Stone Soup's stories, poems, and illustrations are all by children. It's the perfect gift for creative 8- to 13-year-olds.
Published 6 times a year: Jan., March, May, July, Sept., Nov.
☐ 1 yr. $34 ☐ 2 yrs. $55 ☐ 3 yrs. $75
Canada and Mexico add $6/year. Other countries add $12/year.
Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Gift card from
www.stonesoup.com
P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063
800-447-4569
NY

BOB & RAY CDs
94 HOURS OF BOB & RAY ON 24 ALBUMS
Wally Ballou • The Slow Talkers of America
Mary Backstayge • The Komodo Dragon
All your favorites!
Makes a great gift!
Just Released!
Bob & Ray
The Soap Operas, Volume 5
featuring Mary Backstayge, Noble Wife
BobandRay.com™
1-800-528-4424 NY54

HUMMINGBIRD Pin or Earrings
www.rnstudios.com
Sterling $35
14k Gold $175
w/ diamond eye
Post or Wire Earrings
Sterling $55
14k Gold $297
w/ diamond eye
S/H $5.75
1-800-235-0471
ROGER NICHOLS Studios
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701
Velvet Box

ZEBRA HALL
the extraordinary toy shop
ZEBRAHALL.COM or 1.800.834.9165

ANNALS OF PUBLISHING

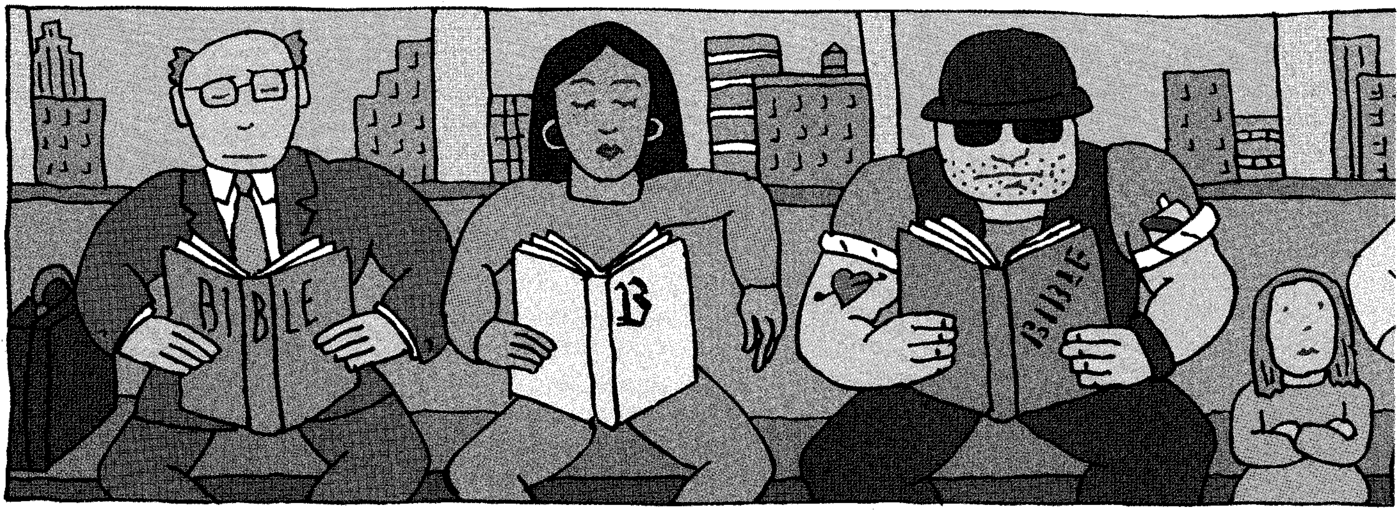
THE GOOD BOOK BUSINESS

Why publishers love the Bible.

BY DANIEL RADOSH

In a sixth-floor conference room of an office building near Nashville International Airport, Rodney Hatfield's BlackBerry buzzed with an incoming e-mail: "The Lord placed a vision on our hearts of a skaters' Bible. We really love the N.K.J.V. and would love to use this version. Who can I talk to regarding this? We hope to pack the study Bible with testimonies from pros, devotions, skating tips, etc."

Hatfield is the vice-president of marketing for the Bible division of Thomas Nelson Publishers, and the N.K.J.V. (the New King James Version) is its best-selling translation. Thomas Nelson has a history stretching back to 1798, and, in the American market, it is by some measures the largest Christian publisher, the second-largest publisher of Bibles, and the ninth-largest publishing house of any kind. The e-mail was from a Florida skateboard ministry, and Hatfield read it impassively but not dismissively. After all, one of the company's lead titles for the fall, "The Family Foundations Study Bible," had its origins in a similarly unsolicited suggestion from an outsider. True, that source was more estimable (a major Christian retailer) and the idea less fanciful. But the general principle—that Scripture can be repackaged to meet the demands of an increasingly segmented market—is at the heart of the modern Bible-publishing industry.



In recent years, the evangelical drive to bring Scripture to the widest possible readership has produced ingenious marketing gimmicks and

SEYMOUR CHWAST

The familiar observation that the Bible is the best-selling book of all time obscures a more startling fact: the Bible is the best-selling book of the year, every year. Calculating how many Bibles are sold in the United States is a virtually impossible task, but a conservative estimate is that in 2005 Americans purchased some twenty-five million Bibles—twice as many as the most recent Harry Potter book. The amount spent annually on Bibles has been put at more than half a billion dollars.

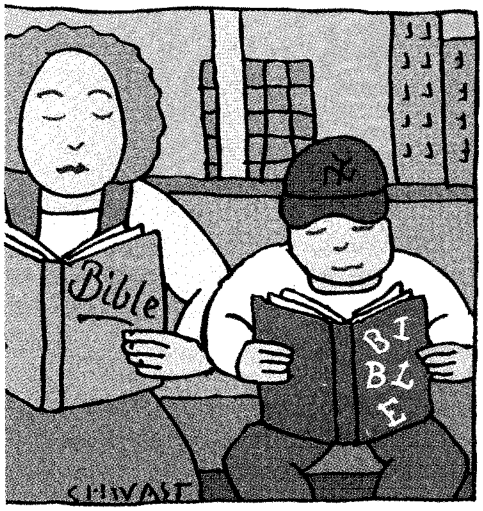
In some ways, this should not be surprising. According to the Barna Group, an evangelical polling firm, forty-seven per cent of Americans read the Bible every week. But other research has found that ninety-one per cent of American households own at least one Bible—the average household owns four—which means that Bible publishers manage to sell twenty-five million copies a year of a book that almost everybody already has. Thomas Nelson's Bible sales increased more than fifteen per cent last year, and such commercial possibilities have begun to attract mainstream publishers to an area dominated by a half-dozen Christian houses. Penguin published two new editions of the Bible this fall, and in July HarperSanFrancisco, part of HarperCollins, announced the creation of a Bible imprint. In June, Thomas Nelson, which last changed hands thirty-seven years ago, for $2.6 million, was purchased by a private investment firm for four hundred and seventy-three million dollars.

This is an intensely competitive business, and, despite the provenance of "The Family Foundations Study Bible," publishers rarely rely on mere inspiration. Another new Nelson release, "The Grace for the Moment Daily Bible," had a more typically strategic genesis: it is an extension of one of the publisher's most popular brands, a series of devotional books by Max Lucado, a Texas minister whose many titles have sold nearly fifty million copies. Nelson has seventeen imprints in addition to the Nelson Bible Group, and when it has a popular writer like Lucado it will spin him off into as many different lines as possible. The "Daily Bible" features Scripture portions paired with short essays excerpted from other Lucado titles. In the absence of such ready-made material, Bible publishers formulate projects using classic market research. Every year, Nelson Bible executives analyze their product line for shortcomings, scrutinize the competition's offerings, and talk with consumers, retailers, and pastors about their needs.

Nelson categorizes "Grace for the Moment" as an everyday-life Bible, whereas "Family Foundations" is a study

Bible. The distinction points to one way in which publishers sell multiple copies of the Bible to the same customers. "They each have a different purpose," Hatfield told me. "It's kind of like a tool chest. All the tools are tools, but they're designed for doing different things." And there are distinctions within each category. There are study Bibles that focus on theology, on historical context, or on practical applications of Biblical teachings. There are devotional Bibles for new believers, couples, brides, and cowboys. On an airplane recently, I saw a woman reading a surfers' Bible very similar to the proposed skaters' one. The variety is seemingly limitless. Nelson Bible Group's 2006 catalogue lists more than a hundred titles.

"I almost liken it to what happened in radio," Wayne Hastings, the publisher of Nelson's Bible division, said. "Look at satellite radio—what is that, a hundred and seventy-eight stations? And it's all niched. We're doing the same thing in Bibles." In this process, style is nearly as important as content. Bible publishers depend heavily on focus groups, surveys, and trend-spotting firms. For cover designs, they subscribe to fashion-industry color reports. Tim Jordan, a Bible marketing manager at B. & H. Publishing Group, an arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "It doesn't have to be 'a King James Bible in black bonded leather, and we might offer it to you in burgundy.' In years past, that might have been O.K., but the game has changed."



st array of Bibles aimed at niche audiences.

Bible publishing in the twenty-first century involves an intersection of faith and consumerism that is typical of contemporary American evangelicalism. Peter Thuesen, a religious historian and the author of "In Discordance with the Scriptures," a history of Bible translation controversies in America, sees in Bible publishing "a growing comfort with commercialization." He explained, "Different kinds of packaging can always be seen by true believers as having an evangelical utility. If it helps reach people with the Word, then it's not bad. You can consecrate the market."

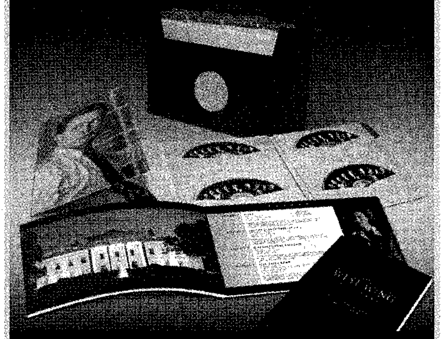
As with so much of American popular culture, the modern era of Bible publishing has its spiritual roots in the nineteen-sixties. Through the first half of the twentieth century, the Bible, literally hidebound, had been synonymous with the establishment. Though there had been two major American translations—in 1901 and 1946—they were scholarly and dense, and the archaic King James Version, of 1611, remained dominant.

Into this world came "Good News for Modern Man." Published by the American Bible Society in 1966, "Good News for Modern Man" was a Bible for the young and disaffected. It resembled a mass-market illustrated paperback novel. A year later, five million copies were in print. Other publishers were quick to follow this lead, according to Paul Gutjahr, a professor of religious studies and English at Indiana University. Tyndale House published the Living Bible, a freewheeling paraphrase. The spirit of the era is best captured by an edition of the Living Bible put out under the title "The Way," which features psychedelic lettering and photographs of shaggy-haired young people and describes Jesus as "the greatest spiritual Activist who ever lived." The success of these accessible, culturally relevant Bibles alerted publishers to a new world of possibility. They introduced women's Bibles in pastel colors, recruited celebrity pastors to write exegeses, and made room for breezy spiritual pep talks alongside, or instead of, the scholarly commentary.

"Good News for Modern Man" was revolutionary not just in its packaging but also in its text. Until then, major Bible translations in English had taken an approach now known as "formal equivalence," striving to maintain the sentence structure, phrasing, and idioms of the original Hebrew and Greek. The Good

THE WEST WING

COMPLETE SERIES
DVD GIFT SET
NOW AVAILABLE

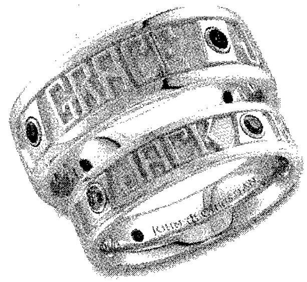


Package includes all seven hit seasons on 45 discs—
Plus the Pilot Script!

ADVERTISEMENT

on the town

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

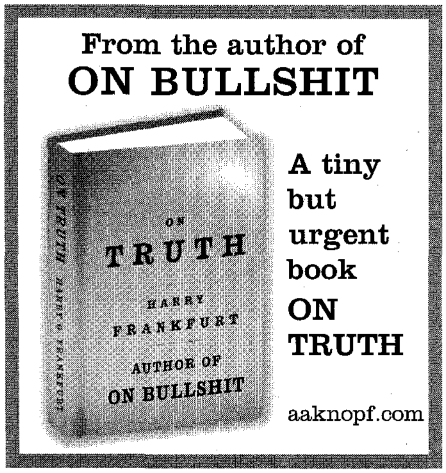


CHILDREN'S NAMES AND BIRTHSTONES

View our entire collection online. Available in sterling silver, gold, and platinum. From $190. Free catalogue. Three-day rush service available. Order by December 20th for holiday delivery!

888.646.6466 www.ringbox.com

JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN



From the author of
ON BULLSHIT

ON TRUTH
HARRY FRANKFURT
AUTHOR OF ON BULLSHIT

A tiny but urgent book ON TRUTH

aaknopf.com

Create Memories
that last longer than the wine
Give The California Wine Club!

Since 1990 we have featured limited production wines handcrafted by California's best artisan winemakers.

Every month is an adventure to be uncorked and a memory waiting to be created. $32.95/month plus shipping and includes:

- Two bottles of award-winning wine
- Entertaining magazine, *Uncorked*
- A 100% money back guarantee

Send as many months as you wish!

VISA · MC · AMEX · Void Where Prohibited

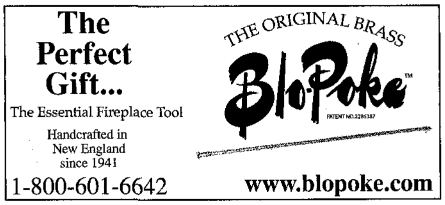
1-800-777-4443
www.cawineclub.com

THE CALIFORNIA Wine Club SINCE 1990

Experience the Essence of India

Packages from $2,220
SingaporeAir.com/TourIndia
SINGAPORE AIRLINES

“STRETCH”
www.rnstudios.com
Sterling Silver $ 65.00
14k Gold $ 349.00
Velvet Box
1-1/2" Wide Pin
800-235-0471
ROGER NICHOLS Studios S/H $5.75
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701



The Perfect Gift...
The Essential Fireplace Tool
Handcrafted in New England since 1941
THE ORIGINAL BRASS BloPoke™
1-800-601-6642
www.blopoke.com

News Translation, as it’s usually known, followed the precepts of “functional equivalence”—translating not word for word but thought for thought, with the goal of capturing the meaning of the original text, even if that required massaging the words or reordering sentences. Walter Harrelson, a Bible scholar who served on the committee that produced the relatively formal New Revised Standard Version, in 1989, likes to say that formal equivalence carries the reader back to the world of the Bible, while functional equivalence transports the Bible into the world of the reader. Harrelson is a proponent of formal equivalence, and argues that preserving the linguistic qualities of the ancient text reminds readers that the Bible is “a document from another world that is luminous and transforming of our world.” Proponents of functional equivalence counter that, to the original audience, the Bible would have sounded contemporary and vernacular, and that translators should preserve these qualities.

The popularity of the “Good News” Bible proved that there was a following for functional equivalence, and other publishers began tinkering with the formula. By far the most successful has been the New International Version, a moderately functional text published by Zondervan in 1973. Highly readable, it was more accurate than its sixties predecessors and more theologically conservative than the 1946 Revised Standard Version. These qualities enabled it, by 1986, to supplant the King James Version as the best-selling translation in America.

The effect of the functional-equivalence approach on the message of the Scriptures is most striking when it comes to rendering metaphors. A literal translation of God’s words to straying Israelites in Amos 4:6 reads, “I gave you cleanness of teeth.” The New International Version eliminates the potential misreading that God was punishing the wicked with dental hygiene, and translates the phrase as “I gave you empty stomachs.” Functionally equivalent translations, at their most radical, often bypass the exotic metaphors of the Bible entirely. Matthew 3:8, in the N.R.S.V., reads, “Bear fruit worthy of repentance.” The Contemporary English Version (1991) reads, “Do something to show that you have really given up your sins.”

It is estimated that there have been more than five hundred English translations of the Bible, and there has never been a time in American history when so many translations have been in widespread use at once. A large Christian bookstore may carry as many as fifteen, although the top six account for ninety-five per cent of sales. Considering that the King James Version lacked a significant rival for three centuries, one could question the necessity of so many versions. Publishers can point to the fact that new archeological discoveries are constantly shedding light on the best way to reconstruct the piecemeal documents that make up Scripture. Language use evolves, too, of course, though it’s hard to argue that anything truly significant changed between the publication of the English Standard Version (2001), Today’s New International Version (2002), and the Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004). A more important factor, it seems, is market demand for more choices. Different denominations want translations tailored precisely to their needs, and the more translations that are available the greater readers’ desire for yet further variety.

There are also commercial incentives. The King James Version is in the public domain, but if a company wants to publish a study Bible or a devotional Bible using a modern translation, it will have to pay royalties to the owner of that translation. Commissioning a proprietary translation is often more cost effective in the long run, especially since it can be licensed out to other publishers. Kenneth Barker, a theologian who ran the committee that translated the N.I.V. and has worked on three other translations, told me that he doesn’t think a new version will be needed for at least twenty-five years, but he doubts there will be such a long break. “We like to think that the motivation is all holy and pure,” he told me, “but finances do enter the picture, and publishers and Bible societies like to have their slice of the pie.”

The popularization of the Bible entered a new phase in 2003, when Thomas Nelson created the BibleZine. Wayne Hastings described a meeting in which a young editor, who had conducted numerous focus groups and online surveys, presented the idea. “She brought in a variety of teen-girl magazines and threw them out on the table,” he recalled. “And then she threw a black bonded-leather

Bible on the table and said, 'Which would you rather read if you were sixteen years old?' " The result was "Revolve," a New Testament that looked indistinguishable from a glossy girls' magazine. The 2007 edition features cover lines like "Guys Speak Their Minds" and "Do U Rush to Crush?" Inside, the Gospels are surrounded by quizzes, photos of beaming teen-agers, and sidebars offering Bible-themed beauty secrets:

> Have you ever had a white stain appear underneath the arms of your favorite dark blouse? Don't freak out. You can quickly give deodorant spots the boot. Just grab a spare toothbrush, dampen with a little water and liquid soap, and gently scrub until the stain fades away. As you wash away the stain, praise God for cleansing us from all the wrong things we have done. (1 John 1:9)

"Revolve" was immediately popular with teen-agers. "They weren't embarrassed anymore," Hastings said. "They could carry it around school, and nobody was going to ask them what in the world it is." Nelson quickly followed up with other titles, including "Refuel," for boys; "Blossom," for tweens; "Real," for the "vibrant urban crowd" (it comes bundled with a CD of Christian rap); and "Divine Health," which has notes by the author of the best-selling diet book "What Would Jesus Eat?" To date, Nelson has sold well over a million BibleZines.

The success of the BibleZine was all the more notable for occurring in a commercial field already crowded with products and with savvy marketing ideas. This year's annual trade show of the Christian Booksellers' Association, in Denver, brought such innovations as "The Outdoor Bible," printed on indestructible plastic sheets that fold up like maps, and "The Story," which features selections from the Bible arranged in chronological order, like a novel. There is a "Men of Integrity" Bible and a "Woman, Thou Art Loosed!" Bible. For kids, there's "The Super Heroes Bible: The Quest for Good Over Evil" and "Psalty's Kids Bible," featuring "Psalty, the famous singing songbook." The "Soul Surfer Bible" has notes by Bethany Hamilton, who lost an arm to a shark in 2003. "2:52 Boys Bible: The Ultimate Manual" promises "gross and gory Bible stuff." In the "Rainbow Study Bible," each verse is color-coded by theme. "The Promise Bible" prints every one of God's promises in boldface. And "The Personal Promise Bible" is custom-printed with the owner's name ("The LORD is Daniel's shepherd"), home town ("Woe to you, Brooklyn! Woe to you, New York!"), and spouse's name ("Gina's two breasts are like two fawns").

There is also a renaissance in the field of audio Bibles. This category has long been dominated by stentorian readings by prominent ministers, and by such famous believers as Charlton Heston, Johnny Cash, and James Earl Jones. The latest audio versions, by contrast, are sophisticated dramatizations that feature sound effects, original music, and large professional casts. In Denver, Zondervan showcased "The Bible Experience," featuring just about every black actor in Hollywood, from Denzel Washington to Garrett Morris, and starring Blair Underwood as Jesus and Samuel L. Jackson as God. The publisher of Zondervan, Scott Bolinder, spoke with excitement about the possibilities for distributing the book on iTunes. "A person hears about it, says, 'I don't know, I'm not parting with thirty-four dollars. But I'll try the Book of Revelation for a dollar-ninety-nine,' " he said. Thomas Nelson is already working on a rival version, in which Jim Caviezel reprises the title role in "The Passion of the Christ." Jason Alexander, of "Seinfeld," is signed on for an unspecified Old Testament character.

It is easy to ascribe a cynical motive to publishers' embrace of commercial trends. Tim Jordan, of B. & H., concedes, "You do get some folks that say you shouldn't treat the Bible as a fashion accessory or a throwaway." Nonetheless, he feels that, from the point of view of a serious religious publisher, fashion can't be ignored as a way of reaching new audiences. The point, he says, is "to expose as many people as you can, because we believe that it's God's word, we believe that it's life-changing, and we don't take that lightly."

In the middle of the summer, Nelson Bible's marketing team assembled at the company's offices, in Nashville, for a fall strategy meeting. The staff members radiated the efficient good cheer of marketing professionals everywhere. Rodney

SHRUBSOLE
104 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022
212.753.8920/inquiries@shrubsole.com

French Sapphire & Diamond Bracelet
c. 1925, $35,000.

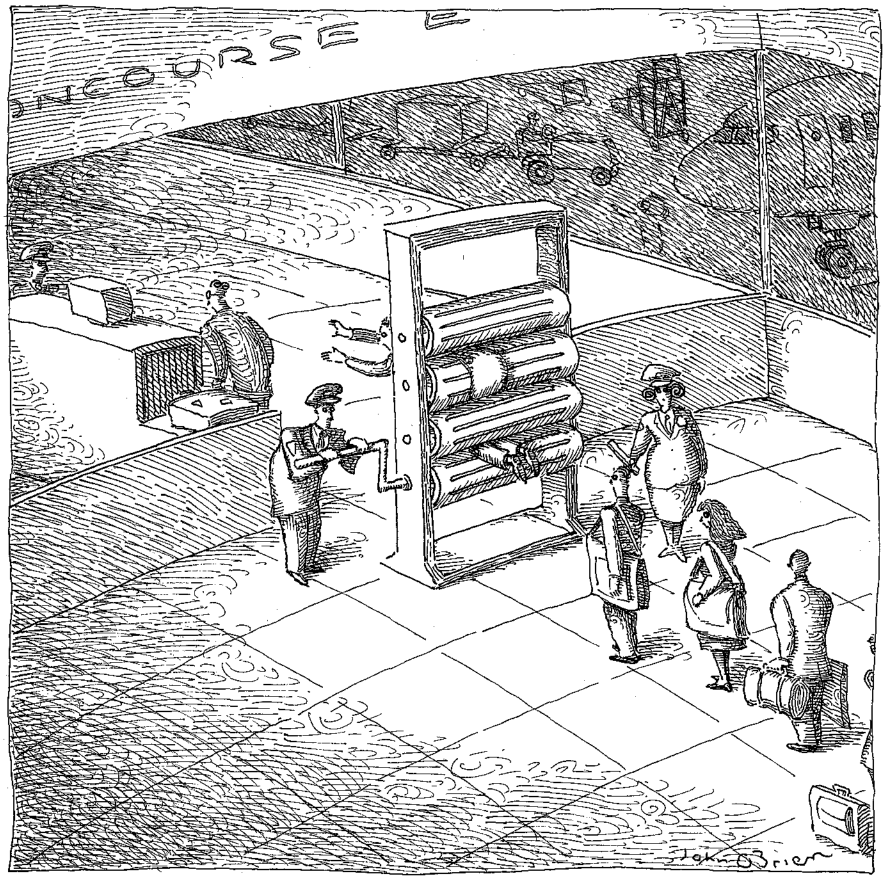
We buy jewelry & silver every day.
To see more of our inventory please visit
our shop, or www.shrubsole.com

A MUST FOR WINE LOVERS
A Hedonist in the Cellar
JAY McINERNEY'S
NEW BOOK ON WINE IS
"CRISP, STYLISH, FUNNY"
—NY TIMES
Learn how to impress the sommelier!
AAKNOPF.COM

THE RACONTEURS
BROKEN BOY SOLDIERS
FEATURING
'STEADY, AS SHE GOES'
"...garage-rock cut with
incisive pop hooks."
NEW YORK TIMES
Available at Music/DVD Locations
BARNES&NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS
www.bn.com

TheaterMania.com
Up-to-date reviews, news, and tickets
Broadway • Off-Broadway • Nationwide
Over 510,000 members enjoy
our theater discounts and special offers.
JOIN FOR FREE AND YOU MAY WIN TICKETS TO A HIT SHOW!
visit www.TheaterMania.com

Rabbit Language
or "Are you going to eat that?"
by Carolyn 'R' Crampton
A humorous guide to communicating with your pet rabbit.
The perfect gift for animal lovers!
Available on Amazon.



• •

Hatfield, his thick hair mostly gray, sat at a corner of the conference-room table while Scott Schwertly, the marketing director, got things rolling. "If we're going to start with the 'Family Foundations' Bible, let's go ahead and pull out the five-by-five matrix for that title," Schwertly said. The matrix is a chart of twenty-five squares; an axis along the top identifies "Target Audiences/Needs," such as "Churches/Pastors," and an axis down the side shows "What you will do to reach them."

An unusual challenge of Bible marketing is that there is no living author to do promotion. As a result, endorsements by well-known pastors become crucial. These are often the only names that will go on the cover. Hatfield asked about targeting the pastors David Jeremiah and Rick Warren: "Maybe there's even a customized version of this that they can brand for their ministry." The megachurch movement has created attractive possibilities for Bible marketers. A single recommendation from the pulpit of the right pastor can mean ten thousand potential sales.

With the book's marketing budget set at sixty thousand dollars, ads in mainstream publications were out of the question, but Kelly Holt, a marketing specialist, presented ideas for a campaign to run in several Christian magazines, including *SpiritLed Woman*, *MOMSense*, and *Rev!*, a magazine for pastors. Holt said, "The imagery would be the tired family at Disney World who's waiting in line all sweaty and nasty, and the tagline would be, like, 'There's a better way to spend quality time together.'" In addition to the Christian press, Nelson has the advantage of being able to place ads for its own products in its BibleZines. Ads for Christian horror novels and a reality show about missionaries ran in "Refuel."

Next, the meeting proceeded to the "Grace for the Moment Daily Bible." The marketing budget for this was only about half that of "Family Foundations," because Nelson was counting on Max Lucado's name to do most of the selling. The marketing group had explored giveaways on Christian radio stations and a collaboration with DaySpring, a Christian greeting-card company owned by Hallmark, for a line of Max Lucado cards. The group also discussed promoting the book when Lucado made appearances at Women of Faith, a travelling ministry that holds two-day "spiritual spas" attracting as many as twenty thousand paying worshippers. The largest chunk of the budget was going toward consumer ads, targeting both men and women, in Christian magazines. "I need some feedback," another marketing specialist said. She held up a print ad—a white orchid on a satiny black background—that had been created to run in "Redefine," a new BibleZine for baby boomers.

Hatfield made a suggestion: "I guess what it doesn't say enough of is 'Max Lucado.'"

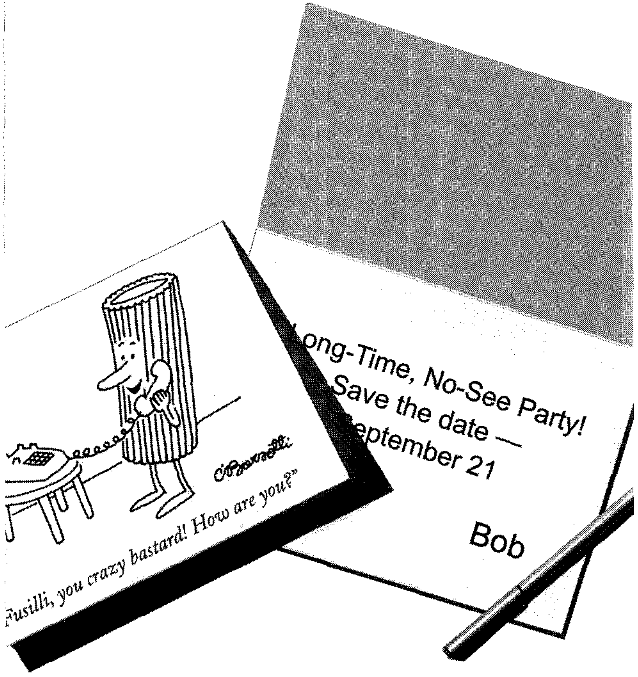
"That should be huge," Jennifer Willingham, a publicist, said dryly. "Drop out your image: white sheet of paper and 'Max Lucado Bible.'"

Although Bible sales in America have been robust for the past decade, the business is still fraught with anxieties. For one thing, Bibles are expensive to produce—two to four times the cost of a typical hardcover book—and retail at prices that often leave a very small profit margin. ("The Family Foundations Study Bible" lists at $39.99 for the hardcover and $59.99 for the bonded-leather edition.) The expense begins with the page count: most Bibles are nearly two thousand pages long. Publishers must often commission custom fonts that are thin enough to keep the Bible compact and dark enough to read, but not so dark that they bleed through the thin (and expensive) paper. Internal design is complicated, too, with footnotes, study notes, center-column references, charts, maps, and illustrations. Leather covers add to the outlay. Gilding, a labor-intensive process, can be simulated with a spray stain, but costs remain high. Thomas Nelson stitches most of its bindings, though other publishers have moved toward glue. Red-letter Bibles require two-color printing. Tabs, ribbons, and boxes add to the cost.

There is also concern that Bible publishers, for all their marketing ingenuity, have outsmarted themselves. Tim Jordan said, "There's been research that has shown that half the people who come into a Christian bookstore intending to buy a Bible, with money in their pocket, leave without one, because they get overwhelmed."

CUSTOM NOTE CARDS

Our wit.


Long-Time, No-See Party!
Save the date —
September 21
Bob
"Fusilli, you crazy bastard! How are you?"

Your charm.

Custom note cards featuring your favorite *New Yorker* cartoons and covers are available at The Cartoon Bank. Order blank or with your personalized message inside.

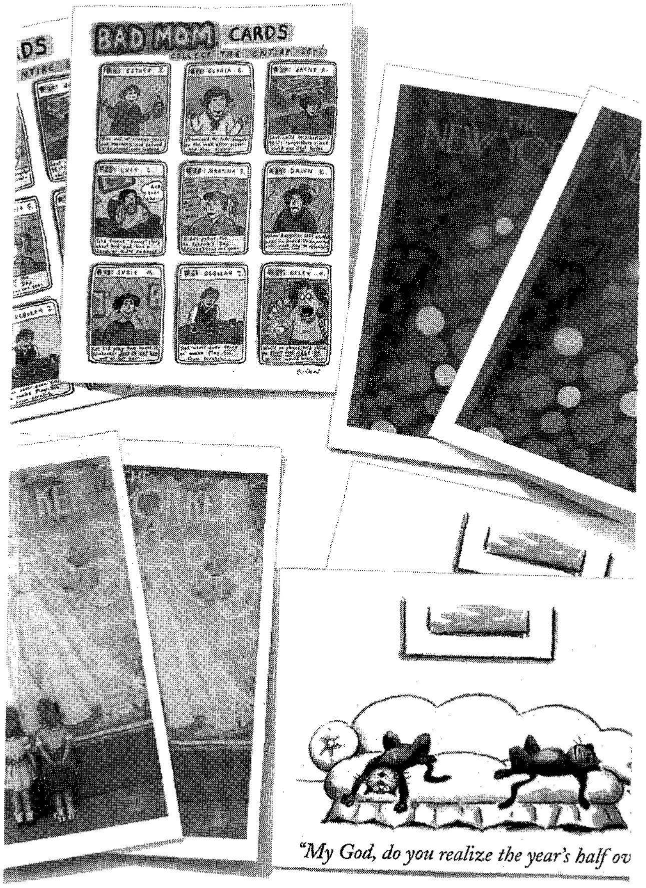
Perfect for invitations, holiday greetings, acknowledgments, announcements, or just staying in touch.

$29.95 per box of 20 blank cards
$39.95 per box of 20 personalized cards

ORDER ONLINE.

WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company
1-800-897-8666

NOTE CARDS


BAD MOM CARDS
"My God, do you realize the year's half ov

CUSTOM SERVICE
FROM THE CARTOON BAN

Let us help you create the perfect mailing for your special event, including

Wedding Invitations
Baby Announcements
Change of Address Cards
Holiday Greetings
Birthday Bash Invitations
Thank-You Notes
Graduation Party Invitations

www.cartoonbank.com

For personalized service, ca
1-800-897-8666.

In an auditorium at the Christian Booksellers' Association show this summer, Nelson's Wayne Hastings, a dapper man, nearly bald with a trim mustache, took the stage for a seminar on this issue. For half an hour, he laid out his company's new research into customers' "felt needs." According to Nelson's findings, people don't come into a store looking for a specific translation—the criterion by which most retailers arrange their Bible shelves—but, rather, to meet a need. More than sixty per cent of Bibles are purchased as gifts. Others are bought by people with scenarios in mind: I'll study it before breakfast; I'll read it on the bus. Hastings's message was that booksellers need to orient their displays to this need. "Are you willing to break some paradigms?" he asked. Behind a curtain, his company had set up a prototype for the Bible department of tomorrow. It consisted of color-coded shelves and packaging, organized not by translation but according to Nelson's six felt needs. Nelson says that ninety-five per cent of retailers have responded positively, but the reaction from other publishers has been lukewarm. Zondervan wants to stick with a translation-based system, which, perhaps not coincidentally, benefits its popular New International Version. Tyndale and B. & H. accept the felt-need premise but are quibbling over the specific categories, and are skeptical about the feasibility of industry-wide color-coding. Tim Jordan said, "You're not going to go to all the potato-chip companies and tell these people, 'You've got to change your packaging to reflect some common color for the potato-chip aisle.' I don't think Frito-Lay is going to go for that."

The most obvious solution would be fewer choices, but, given the enthusiasm that consumers have shown for a diversified market and the investment that publishers have made in satisfying this demand, that's out of the question. The situation worries some people. Phyllis Tickle, a former religion editor of *Publishers Weekly* and the author of popular prayer books, told me, "There's a certain scandal to what's happened to Bible publishing over the last fifteen years." Tickle is contributing to a new Bible paraphrase for Nelson called "The Voice," which is intended for the progressive emergent church, so she is not entirely opposed to modern repackaging. The problem, as she sees it, is that "instead of demanding that the believer, the reader, the seeker step out from the culture and become more Christian, more enclosed within ecclesial definition, we're saying, 'You stay in the culture and we'll come to you.' And, therefore, how are we going to separate out the culturally transient and trashy from the eternal?" The consumerist culture in which BibleZines and the like participate is, to Tickle, "entirely antithetical to the traditional Christian understanding of meekness and self-denial and love and compassion." In Tickle's view, reimagining the Bible according to the latest trends is not merely a question of surmounting a language barrier. It involves violating "something close to moral or spiritual barriers."

Of course, Tickle is questioning an industry trend, not publishers' sincerity. "I have yet to meet the first head of house that wasn't in it with some sense of calling as surely as a clergyman is," she said. Sitting in the Zondervan suite during the Christian Booksellers' Association show, Paul Caminiti, the head of the company's Bible division, cited an appropriately Biblical parallel, a story from the Book of Acts about Philip the Evangelist and a man known as the Ethiopian eunuch. The Ethiopian eunuch "was really the chief financial officer for the Persian empire," he said. "He was a brilliant man. He was probably the Alan Greenspan of his day. But he has a text Bible—and he has been to Jerusalem, so he is one of these people who is spiritually intrigued—but he can't make head or tail of it. And it's not because he isn't smart. So God sends Philip alongside." According to the Bible story, Philip ran up to the Ethiopian's chariot and, in the King James Version, asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The Ethiopian answered, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Philip, Caminiti explained, "provides just a little bit of color commentary, and the light comes on." After listening to Philip's explication of the passage, the Ethiopian orders his chariot to stop by some water so that Philip can baptize him. "And that's what we're doing," Caminiti concluded. "We're coming alongside the text and providing some color commentary. And some color covers." ♦

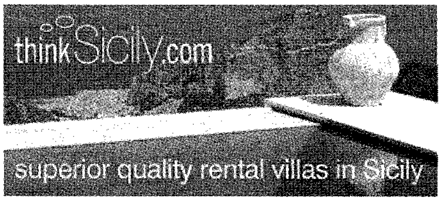
Beat the Price Increase
On All Herman Miller®
THE AMAZING AERON
• 1-Year money back guarantee
• FREE Shipping in the Continental U.S.
• We Will NOT Be Undersold!
PRICES START AT $699
Exclusive TrueBlack. Only at Sit4Less.com
Fully loaded Aerons® starting at Only $899
Sit4Less.com
Right Chair, Right Price, Right Now!
Call Us Today At 877-490-LESS

SWANS ISLAND BLANKETS
Exquisite hand woven blankets, scarves, and wraps from the coast of Maine.
www.swansislandblankets.com/ny
1 888 526 9526

TIMESHARES 60-80% off Retail!
★ Best Resorts, Prices &Weeks
★ 500+ Worldwide Resorts!
★ Call For FREE Catalog
Buy Direct! (800) 348-0094
holidaygroup.com/save

JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
ORDER BY DEC. 20TH FOR HOLIDAY DELIVERY!
Children's Names & Birthstones
UP TO 5 NAMES FROM $190 PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

European Beret $10
100% Wool • One Size Fits All
Black, Navy, Brown, Red, Camel, Grey
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $2 shipping per order
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N126 • Portland, OR 97205


thinkSicily.com
superior quality rental villas in Sicily

A REPORTER AT LARGE

KNOWING THE ENEMY

Can social scientists redefine the "war on terror"?

BY GEORGE PACKER

In 1993, a young captain in the Australian Army named David Kilcullen was living among villagers in West Java, as part of an immersion program in the Indonesian language. One day, he visited a local military museum that contained a display about Indonesia's war, during the nineteen-fifties and sixties, against a separatist Muslim insurgency movement called Darul Islam. "I had never heard of this conflict," Kilcullen told me recently. "It's hardly known in the West. The Indonesian government won, hands down. And I was fascinated by how it managed to pull off such a successful counterinsurgency campaign."

Kilcullen, the son of two left-leaning academics, had studied counterinsurgency as a cadet at Duntroon, the Australian West Point, and he decided to pursue a doctorate in political anthropology at the University of New South Wales. He chose as his dissertation subject the Darul Islam conflict, conducting research over tea with former guerrillas while continuing to serve in the Australian Army. The rebel movement, he said, was bigger than the Malayan Emergency—the twelve-year Communist revolt against British rule, which was finally put down in 1960, and which has become a major point of reference in the military doctrine of counterinsurgency. During the years that Kilcullen worked on his dissertation, two events in Indonesia deeply affected his thinking. The first was the rise—in the same region that had given birth to Darul Islam, and among some of the same families—of a more extreme Islamist movement called Jemaah Islamiya, which became a Southeast Asian affiliate of Al Qaeda. The second was East Timor's successful struggle for independence from Indonesia. Kilcullen witnessed the former as he was carrying out his field work; he participated in the latter as an infantry-company commander in a United Nations intervention force. The experiences shaped the conclusions about counter-insurgency in his dissertation, which he finished in 2001, just as a new war was about to begin.

"I saw extremely similar behavior and extremely similar problems in an Islamic insurgency in West Java and a Christian-separatist insurgency in East Timor," he said. "After 9/11, when a lot of people were saying, 'The problem is Islam,' I was thinking, It's something deeper than that. It's about human social networks and the way that they operate." In West Java, elements of the failed Darul Islam insurgency—a local separatist movement with mystical leanings—had resumed fighting as Jemaah Islamiya, whose outlook was Salafist and global. Kilcullen said, "What that told me about Jemaah Islamiya is that it's not about theology." He went on, "There are elements in human psychological and social makeup that drive what's happening. The Islamic bit is secondary. This is human behavior in an Islamic setting. This is not 'Islamic behavior.'" Paraphrasing the American political scientist Roger D. Petersen, he said, "People don't get pushed into rebellion by their ideology. They get pulled in by their social networks." He noted that all fifteen Saudi hijackers in the September 11th plot had trouble with their fathers. Although radical ideas prepare the way for disaffected young men to become violent jihadists, the reasons they convert, Kilcullen said, are more mundane and familiar: family, friends, associates.

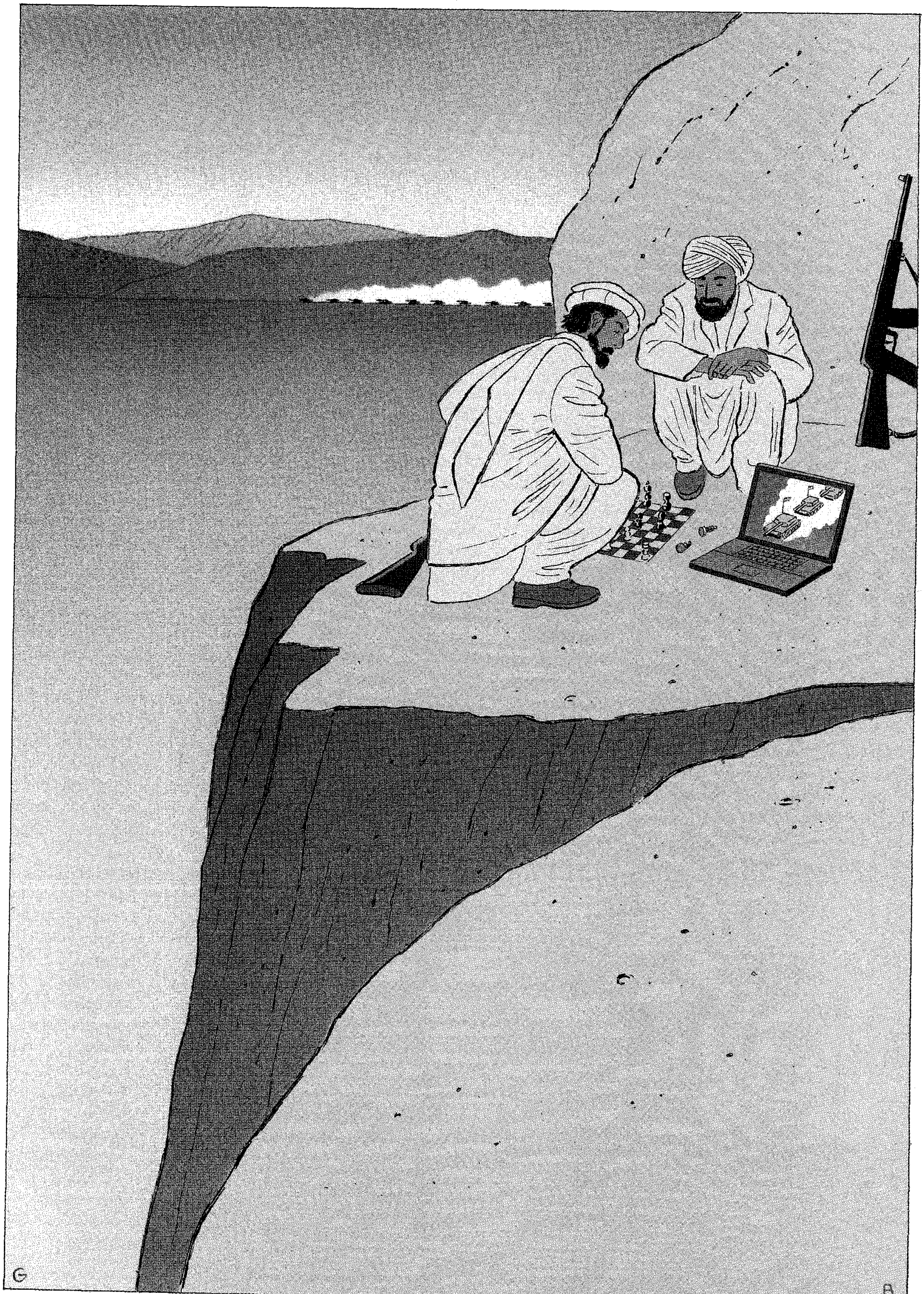
Indonesia's failure to replicate in East Timor its victory in West Java later influenced Kilcullen's views about what the Bush Administration calls the "global war on terror." In both instances, the Indonesian military used the same harsh techniques, including forced population movements, coercion of locals into security forces, stringent curfews, and even lethal pressure on civilians to take the government side. The reason that the effort in East Timor failed, Kilcullen concluded, was globalization. In the late nineties, a Timorese international propaganda campaign and ubiquitous media coverage prompted international intervention, thus ending the use of tactics that, in the obscure jungles of West Java in the fifties, outsiders had known nothing about. "The globalized information environment makes counterinsurgency even more difficult now," Kilcullen said.

Just before the 2004 American elections, Kilcullen was doing intelligence work for the Australian government, sifting through Osama bin Laden's public statements, including transcripts of a video that offered a list of grievances against America: Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, global warming. The last item brought Kilcullen up short. "I thought, Hang on! What kind of jihadist are you?" he recalled. The odd inclusion of environmentalist rhetoric, he said, made clear that "this wasn't a list of genuine grievances. This was an Al Qaeda *information* strategy." Ron Suskind, in his book "The One Percent Doctrine," claims that analysts at the C.I.A. watched a similar video, released in 2004, and concluded that "bin Laden's message was clearly designed to assist the President's reëlection." Bin Laden shrewdly created an implicit association between Al Qaeda and the Democratic Party, for he had come to feel that Bush's strategy in the war on terror was sustaining his own global importance. Indeed, in the years after September 11th Al Qaeda's core leadership had become a propaganda hub. "If bin Laden didn't have access to global media, satellite communications, and the Internet, he'd just be a cranky guy in a cave," Kilcullen said.

In 2004, Kilcullen's writings and lectures brought him to the attention of an official working for Paul Wolfowitz, then

GUY BILLOUT

"It's now fundamentally an information fight," the insurgency expert David Kilcullen says. "The enemy gets that, and we don't yet."


G
B

the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Wolfowitz asked him to help write the section on "irregular warfare" in the Pentagon's "Quadrennial Defense Review," a statement of department policy and priorities, which was published earlier this year. Under the leadership of Donald Rumsfeld, who resigned in November, the Pentagon had embraced a narrow "shock-and-awe" approach to war-fighting, emphasizing technology, long-range firepower, and spectacular displays of force. The new document declared that activities such as "long-duration unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and military support for stabilization and reconstruction efforts" needed to become a more important component of the war on terror. Kilcullen was partly responsible for the inclusion of the phrase "the long war," which has become the preferred term among many military officers to describe the current conflict. In the end, the Rumsfeld Pentagon was unwilling to make the cuts in expensive weapons systems that would have allowed it to create new combat units and other resources necessary for a proper counterinsurgency strategy.

In July, 2005, Kilcullen, as a result of his work on the Pentagon document, received an invitation to attend a conference on defense policy, in Vermont. There he met Henry Crumpton, a highly regarded official who had supervised the C.I.A.'s covert activities in Afghanistan during the 2001 military campaign that overthrew the Taliban. The two men spent much of the conference talking privately, and learned, among other things, that they saw the war on terror in the same way. Soon afterward, Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, hired Crumpton as the department's coördinator for counterterrorism, and Crumpton, in turn, offered Kilcullen a job. For the past year, Kilcullen has occupied an office on the State Department's second floor, as Crumpton's chief strategist. In some senses, Kilcullen has arrived too late: this year, the insurgency in Iraq has been transformed into a calamitous civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, and his ideas about counterinsurgency are unlikely to reverse the country's disintegration. Yet radical Islamist movements now extend across the globe, from Somalia to Afghanistan and Indonesia, and Kilcullen—an Australian anthropologist and lieutenant colonel, who is "on loan" to the U.S. government—offers a new way to understand and fight a war that seems to grow less intelligible the longer it goes on.

Kilcullen is thirty-nine years old, and has a wide pink face, a fondness for desert boots, and an Australian's good-natured bluntness. He has a talent for making everything sound like common sense by turning disturbing explanations into brisk, cheerful questions: "America is very, very good at big, short conventional wars? It's not very good at small, long wars? But it's even worse at big, long wars? And that's what we've got." Kilcullen's heroes are soldier-intellectuals, both real (T. E. Lawrence) and fictional (Robert Jordan, the flinty, self-reliant schoolteacher turned guerrilla who is the protagonist of Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls"). On his bookshelves, alongside monographs by social scientists such as Max Gluckman and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, is a knife that he took from a militiaman he had just ambushed in East Timor. "If I were a Muslim, I'd probably be a jihadist," Kilcullen said as we sat in his office. "The thing that drives these guys—a sense of adventure, wanting to be part of the moment, wanting to be in the big movement of history that's happening now—that's the same thing that drives me, you know?"

More than three years into the Iraq war and five into the conflict in Afghanistan, many members of the American military—especially those with combat experience—have begun to accept the need to learn the kind of counterinsurgency tactics that it tried to leave behind in Vietnam. On December 15th, the Army and the Marine Corps will release an ambitious new counterinsurgency field manual—the first in more than two decades—that will shape military doctrine for many years. The introduction to the field manual says, "Effective insurgents rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. They cleverly use the tools of the global information revolution to magnify the effects of their actions. . . . However, by focusing on efforts to secure the safety and support of the local populace, and through a concerted effort to truly function as learning organizations, the Army and Marine Corps can defeat their insurgent enemies."

One night earlier this year, Kilcullen sat down with a bottle of single-malt Scotch and wrote out a series of tips for company commanders about to be deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is an energetic writer who avoids military and social-science jargon, and he addressed himself intimately to young captains who have had to become familiar with exotica such as "The Battle of Algiers," the 1966 film documenting the insurgency against French colonists. "What does all the theory mean, at the company level?" he asked. "How do the principles translate into action—at night, with the G.P.S. down, the media criticizing you, the locals complaining in a language you don't understand, and an unseen enemy killing your people by ones and twos? How does counterinsurgency actually happen?

"That's Eleanor. She's a fact checker."

There are no universal answers, and insurgents are among the most adaptive opponents you will ever face. Countering them will demand every ounce of your intellect." The first tip is "Know Your Turf": "Know the people, the topography, economy, history, religion and culture. Know every village, road, field, population group, tribal leader, and ancient grievance. Your task is to become the world expert on your district." "Twenty-eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency"—the title riffs on a T. E. Lawrence insurgency manual from the First World War—was disseminated via e-mail to junior officers in the field, and was avidly read.

Last year, in an influential article in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Kilcullen redefined the war on terror as a "global counterinsurgency." The change in terminology has large implications. A terrorist is "a kook in a room," Kilcullen told me, and beyond persuasion; an insurgent has a mass base whose support can be won or lost through politics. The notion of a "war on terror" has led the U.S. government to focus overwhelmingly on military responses. In a counterinsurgency, according to the classical doctrine, which was first laid out by the British general Sir Gerald Templar during the Malayan Emergency, armed force is only a quarter of the effort; political, economic, and informational operations are also required. A war on terror suggests an undifferentiated enemy. Kilcullen speaks of the need to "disaggregate" insurgencies: finding ways to address local grievances in Pakistan's tribal areas or along the Thai-Malay border so that they aren't mapped onto the ambitions of the global jihad. Kilcullen writes, "Just as the Containment strategy was central to the Cold War, likewise a Disaggregation strategy would provide a unifying strategic conception for the war—something that has been lacking to date." As an example of disaggregation, Kilcullen cited the Indonesian province of Aceh, where, after the 2004 tsunami, a radical Islamist organization tried to set up an office and convert a local separatist movement to its ideological agenda. Resentment toward the outsiders, combined with the swift humanitarian action of American and Australian warships, helped to prevent the Acehnese rebellion from becoming part of the global jihad. As for America, this success had more to do with luck than with strategy. Crumpton, Kilcullen's boss, told me that American foreign policy traditionally operates on two levels, the global and the national; today, however, the battlefields are also regional and local, where the U.S. government has less knowledge and where it is not institutionally organized to act. In half a dozen critical regions, Crumpton has organized meetings among American diplomats, intelligence officials, and combat commanders, so that information about cross-border terrorist threats is shared. "It's really important that we define the enemy in narrow terms," Crumpton said. "The thing we should not do is let our fears grow and then inflate the threat. The threat is big enough without us having to exaggerate it."

By speaking of Saddam Hussein, the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, the Taliban, the Iranian government, Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda in terms of one big war, Administration officials and ideologues have made Osama bin Laden's job much easier. "You don't play to the enemy's global information strategy of making it all one fight," Kilcullen said. He pointedly avoided describing this as the Administration's approach. "You say, 'Actually, there are sixty different groups in sixty different countries who all have different objectives. Let's not talk about bin Laden's objectives—let's talk about *your* objectives. How do we solve that problem?'" In other words, the global ambitions of the enemy don't automatically demand a monolithic response.

The more Kilcullen travels to the various theatres of war, the less he thinks that the lessons of Malaya and Vietnam are useful guides in the current conflict. "Classical counterinsurgency is designed to defeat insurgency in one country," he writes in his *Strategic Studies* article. "We need a new paradigm, capable of addressing globalised insurgency." After a recent trip to Afghanistan, where Taliban forces have begun to mount large operations in the Pashto-speaking south of the country, he told me, "This ain't your granddaddy's counterinsurgency." Many American units there, he said, are executing the new field manual's tactics brilliantly. For example, before conducting operations in a given area, soldiers sit down over bread and tea with tribal leaders and find out what they need—Korans, cold-weather gear, a hydroelectric dynamo. In exchange for promises of local support, the Americans gather the supplies and then, within hours of the end of fighting, produce them, to show what can be gained from coöperating.

But the Taliban seem to be waging a different war, driven entirely by information operations. "They're essentially armed propaganda organizations," Kilcullen said. "They switch between guerrilla activity and terrorist activity as they need to, in order to maintain the political momentum, and it's all about an information operation that generates the perception of an unstoppable, growing insurgency." After travelling through southern Afghanistan, Kilcullen e-mailed me:

> One good example of Taliban information strategy is their use of "night letters." They have been pushing local farmers in several provinces (Helmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar) to grow poppy instead of regular crops, and using night-time threats and intimidation to punish those who don't and convince others to convert to poppy. This is not because they need more opium—God knows they already have enough—but because they're trying to detach the local people from the legal economy and the legally approved governance system of the provinces and districts, to weaken the hold of central and provincial government. Get the people doing something illegal, and they're less likely to feel able to support the government, and more willing to do other illegal things (e.g. join the insurgency)—this is a classic old Bolshevik tactic from the early cold war, by the way. They are specifically trying to send the message: "The government can neither help you nor hurt us. We can hurt you, or protect you—the choice is yours." They also use object lessons, making an example of people who don't cooperate—for example, dozens of provincial-level officials have been assassinated this year, again as an "armed propaganda" tool—not because they want one official less but because they want to send the message "We can reach out and touch you if you cross us." Classic armed information operation.

Kilcullen doesn't believe that an entirely "soft" counterinsurgency approach can work against such tactics. In his view, winning hearts and minds is not a matter of making local people *like* you—as some American initiates to counterinsurgency whom I met in Iraq seemed to believe—but of getting them to accept that supporting your side is in their interest, which requires an element of coercion. Kilcullen met senior European officers with the NATO force in Afghanistan who seemed to be applying "a development model to counterinsurgency," hoping that gratitude for good work would bring the Afghans over to their side. He told me, "In a counterinsurgency, the gratitude effect will last until the sun goes down and the insurgents show up and say, 'You're on our side, aren't you? Otherwise, we're going to kill you.' If one side is willing to apply lethal force to bring the population to its side and the other side isn't, ultimately you're going to find yourself losing." Kilcullen was describing a willingness to show local people that supporting the enemy risks harm and hardship, not a campaign like the Phoenix program in Vietnam, in which noncombatants were assassinated; besides being unethical, such a tactic would inevitably backfire in the age of globalized information. Nevertheless, because he talks about war with an analyst's rationalism and a practitioner's matter-of-factness, Kilcullen can appear deceptively detached from its consequences.

An information strategy seems to be driving the agenda of every radical Islamist movement. Kilcullen noted that when insurgents ambush an American convoy in Iraq, "they're not doing that because they want to reduce the number of Humvees we have in Iraq by one. They're doing it because they want spectacular media footage of a burning Humvee." Last year, a letter surfaced that is believed to have been sent from Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's deputy, to the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, nine months before Zarqawi's death; the letter urged Zarqawi to make his videotaped beheadings and mass slaughter of Shiite civilians less gruesome. Kilcullen interpreted the letter as "basically saying to Zarqawi, 'Justify your attacks on the basis of how they support our information strategy.'" As soon as the recent fighting in Lebanon between Hezbollah and Israeli troops ended, Hezbollah marked, with its party flags, houses that had been damaged. Kilcullen said, "That's not a reconstruction operation—it's an information operation. It's influence. They're going out there to send a couple of messages. To the Lebanese people they're saying, 'We're going to take care of you.' To all the aid agencies it's like a dog pissing on trees: they're saying, 'We own this house—don't you touch it.'" He went on, "When the aid agencies arrive a few days later, they have to negotiate with Hezbollah because there's a Hezbollah flag on the house. Hezbollah says, 'Yeah, you can sell a contract to us to fix up that house.' It's an information operation. They're trying to generate *influence*."

The result is an intimidated or motivated population, and a spike in fundraising and recruiting. "When you go on YouTube and look at one of these attacks in Iraq, all you see is the video," Kilcullen said. "If you go to some jihadist Web sites, you see the same video and then a button next to it that says, 'Click here and donate.' " The Afghan or Iraqi or Lebanese insurgent, unlike his Vietnamese or Salvadoran predecessor, can plug into a global media network that will instantly amplify his message. After Kilcullen returned from Afghanistan last month, he stayed up late one Saturday night ("because I have no social life") and calculated how many sources of information existed for a Vietnamese villager in 1966 and for an Afghan villager in 2006. He concluded that the former had ten, almost half under government control, such as Saigon radio and local officials; the latter has twenty-five (counting the Internet as only one), of which just five are controlled by the government. Most of the rest—including e-mail, satellite phone, and text messaging—are independent but more easily exploited by insurgents than by the Afghan government. And it is on the level of influencing perceptions that these wars will be won or lost. "The international information environment is critical to the success of America's mission," Kilcullen said.

In the information war, America and its allies are barely competing. America's information operations, far from being the primary strategy, simply support military actions, and often badly: a Pentagon spokesman announces a battle victory, but no one in the area of the battlefield hears him (or would believe him anyway). Just as the Indonesians failed in East Timor, in spite of using locally successful tactics, Kilcullen said, "We've done a similar thing in Iraq—we've arguably done O.K. on the ground in some places, but we're totally losing the domestic information battle. In Afghanistan, it still could go either way."

However careful Kilcullen is not to criticize Administration policy, his argument amounts to a thoroughgoing critique. As a foreigner who is not a career official in the U.S. government, he has more distance and freedom to discuss the war on jihadism frankly, and in ways that his American counterparts rarely can. "It's now fundamentally an information fight," he said. "The enemy gets that, and we don't yet get that, and I think that's why we're losing."

In late September, Kilcullen was one of the featured speakers at a conference in Washington, organized by the State and Defense Departments, on bringing the civilian branches of the government into the global counterinsurgency effort. In the hallway outside the meeting room, he made a point of introducing me to another speaker, an anthropologist and Pentagon consultant named Montgomery McFate. For five years, McFate later told me, she has been making it her "evangelical mission" to get the Department of Defense to understand the importance of "cultural knowledge." McFate is forty years old, with hair cut stylishly short and an air of humorous cool. When I asked why a social scientist would want to help the war effort, she replied, only half joking, "Because I'm engaged in a massive act of rebellion against my hippie parents."

McFate grew up in the sixties on a communal houseboat in Marin County, California. Her parents were friends with Jack Kerouac and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and one of her schoolmates was the daughter of Jefferson Airplane's Grace Slick and Paul Kantner. Like Kilcullen, she was drawn to the study of human conflict and also its reality: at Yale, where she received a doctorate, her dissertation was based on several years she spent living among supporters of the Irish Republican Army and then among British counterinsurgents. In Northern Ireland, McFate discovered something very like what Kilcullen found in West Java: insurgency runs in families and social networks, held together by persistent cultural narratives—in this case, the eight-hundred-year-old saga of "perfidious Albion." She went on to marry a U.S. Army officer. "When I was little in California, we never believed there was such a thing as the Cold War," McFate said. "That was a bunch of lies that the government fed us to keep us paranoid. Of course, there was a thing called the Cold War, and we nearly lost. And there was no guarantee that we were going to win. And this thing that's happening now is, without taking that too far, similar." After September 11th, McFate said, she became "passionate about one issue: the government's need to actually understand its adversaries," in the same way that the United States came to understand—and thereby undermine—the Soviet Union. If, as Kilcullen and Crumpton maintain, the battlefield in the global counterinsurgency is intimately local, then the American government needs what McFate calls a "granular" knowledge of the social terrains on which it is competing.

In 2004, when McFate had a fellowship at the Office of Naval Research, she got a call from a science adviser to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He had been contacted by battalion commanders with the 4th Infantry Division in a violent sector of the Sunni Triangle, in Iraq. "We're having a really hard time out here—we have no idea how this society works," the commanders said. "Could you help us?" The science adviser replied that he was a mathematical physicist, and turned for help to one of the few anthropologists he could find in the Defense Department.

"Why the big nose?"

For decades, the Pentagon and the humanistic social sciences have had little to do with each other. In 1964, the Pentagon set up a program called, with the self-conscious idealism of the period, Project Camelot. Anthropologists were hired and sent abroad to conduct a multiyear study of the factors that promote stability or war in certain societies, beginning with Chile. When news of the program leaked, the uproar in Chile and America forced Defense Secretary Robert McNamara to cancel it. "The Department of Defense has invested hardly any money in conducting ethnographic research in areas where conflict was occurring since 1965," McFate told me. After Project Camelot and Vietnam, where social scientists often did contract work for the U.S. military, professional associations discouraged such involvement. ("Academic anthropologists hate me for working with D.O.D.," McFate said.) Kilcullen, who calls counterinsurgency "armed social science," told me, "This is fundamentally about the broken relationship between the government and the discipline of anthropology. What broke that relationship is Vietnam. And people still haven't recovered from that." As a result, a complex human understanding of societies at war has been lost. "But it didn't have to be lost," McFate said. During the Second World War, anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Geoffrey Gorer, and Ruth Benedict provided the Allied war effort with essential insights into Asian societies. Gorer and Benedict suggested, for example, that the terms of Japan's surrender be separated from the question of the emperor's abdication, because the emperor was thought to embody the country's soul; doing so allowed the Japanese to accept unconditional surrender. McFate sees herself as reaching back to this tradition of military-academic coöperation.

By 2004, the military desperately needed coöperation. McFate saw Americans in Iraq make one strategic mistake after another because they didn't understand the nature of Iraqi society. In an article in *Joint Force Quarterly*, she wrote, "Once the Sunni Ba'thists lost their prestigious jobs, were humiliated in the conflict, and got frozen out through de-Ba'thification, the tribal network became the backbone of the insurgency. The tribal insurgency is a direct result of our misunderstanding the Iraqi culture." In the course of eighteen months of interviews with returning soldiers, she was told by one Marine Corps officer, "My marines were almost wholly uninterested in interacting with the local population. Our primary mission was the security of Camp Falluja. We relieved soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, and their assessment was that every local was participating or complicit with the enemy. This view was quickly adopted by my unit and framed all of our actions (and reactions)." Another marine told McFate that his unit had lost the battle to influence public opinion because it used the wrong approach to communication: "We were focussed on broadcast media and metrics. But this had no impact because Iraqis spread information through rumor. We should have been visiting their coffee shops."

The result of efforts like McFate's is a new project with the quintessential Pentagon name Cultural Operations Research Human Terrain. It began in the form of a "ruggedized" laptop computer, loaded with data from social-science research conducted in Iraq—such as, McFate said, "an analysis of the eighty-eight tribes and subtribes in a particular province." Now the project is recruiting social scientists around the country to join five-person "human terrain" teams that would go to Iraq and Afghanistan with combat brigades and serve as cultural advisers on six-to-nine-month tours. Pilot teams are planning to leave next spring.

Steve Fondacaro, a retired Army colonel who for a year commanded the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force in Iraq, is in charge of the Human Terrain project. Fondacaro sees the war in the same terms as Kilcullen. "The new element of power that has emerged in the last thirty to forty years and has subsumed the rest is information," he said. "A revolution happened without us knowing or paying attention. Perception truly now is reality, and our enemies know it. We have to fight on the information battlefield." I asked him what the government should have done, say, in the case of revelations of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison. "You're talking to a radical here," Fondacaro said. "Immediately be the first one to tell the story. Don't let anyone else do it. That carries so much strategic weight." He added, "Iraqis are not shocked by torture. It would have impressed them if we had exposed it, punished it, rectified it." But senior military leadership, he said, remains closed to this kind of thinking. He is turning for help to academics—to "social scientists who want to educate me," he said. So far, though, Fondacaro has hired just one anthropologist. When I spoke to her by telephone, she admitted that the assignment comes with huge ethical risks. "I do not want to get anybody killed," she said. Some of her colleagues are curious, she said; others are critical. "I end up getting shunned at cocktail parties," she said. "I see there could be misuse. But I just can't stand to sit back and watch these mistakes happen over and over as people get killed, and do nothing."

LIGHT

Another drought morning after a too brief dawn downpour,
uncountable silvery glitterings on the leaves of the withering maples—

I think of a troop of the blissful blessed approaching Dante,
"a hundred spheres shining," he rhapsodizes, "the purest pearls . . . "

then of the frightening brilliant myriad gleam in my lamp
of the eyes of the vast swarm of bats I found once in a cave,

a chamber whose walls seethed with a spaceless carpet of creatures,
their cacophonous, keen, insistent, incessant squeakings and squealings

churning the warm, rank, cloying air; of how one,
perfectly still among all the fitfully twitching others,

was looking straight at me, gazing solemnly, thoughtfully up
from beneath the intricate furl of its leathery wings

as though it couldn't believe I was there, or were trying to place me,
to situate me in the gnarl we'd evolved from, and now,

the trees still heartrendingly asparkle, Dante again,
this time the way he'll refer to a figure he meets as "the life of . . ."

not the soul, or person, the *life*, and once more the bat, and I,
our lives in that moment together, our lives, our *lives*,

his with no vision of celestial splendor, no poem,
mine with no flight, no unblundering dash through the dark,

his without realizing it would, so soon, no longer exist,
mine having to know for us both that everything ends,

world, after-world, even their memory, steamed away
like the film of uncertain vapor of the last of the luscious rain.

—*C. K. Williams*

At the counterinsurgency conference in Washington, the tone among the uniformed officers, civilian officials, and various experts was urgent, almost desperate. James Kunder, a former marine and the acting deputy of the U.S. Agency for International Development, pointed out that in Iraq and Afghanistan "the civilian agencies have received 1.4 per cent of the total money," whereas classical counterinsurgency doctrine says that eighty per cent of the effort should be nonmilitary. During Vietnam, his agency had fifteen thousand employees; it now has two thousand. After the end of the Cold War, foreign-service and aid budgets were sharply cut. "Size matters," Kunder said, noting that throughout the civilian agencies there are shortages of money and personnel. To staff the embassy in Baghdad, the State Department has had to steal officers from other embassies, and the government can't even fill the provincial reconstruction teams it has tried to set up in Iraq and Afghanistan. While correcting these shortages could not have prevented the deepening disaster in Iraq, they betray the government's priorities.

In early 2004, as Iraq was beginning to unravel, Senator Richard Lugar, the Indiana Republican who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Joseph Biden, the Delaware Democrat, introduced legislation for a nation-building office, under the aegis of the State Department. The office would be able to tap into contingency funds and would allow cabinet-department officials, along with congressional staff people and civilian experts, to carry out overseas operations to help stabilize and rebuild failed states and societies shattered by war—to do it deliberately and well rather than in the ad-hoc fashion that has characterized interventions from Somalia and Kosovo to Iraq. Lugar envisioned both an active-duty contingent and a reserve corps.

The bill's biggest supporter was the military, which frequently finds itself forced to do tasks overseas for which civilians are better prepared, such as training police or rebuilding sewers. But Colin Powell, then the Secretary of State, and other Administration officials refused to give it strong backing. Then, in the summer of 2004, the Administration reversed course by announcing the creation, in the

State Department, of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization; the office was given the imprimatur of National Security Presidential Directive 44. At the September conference in Washington, Kilcullen held up the office as a model for how to bring civilians into counterinsurgency: "True enough, the words 'insurgency,' 'insurgent,' and 'counterinsurgency' do not appear in N.S.P.D. 44, but it clearly envisages the need to deploy integrated whole-of-government capabilities in hostile environments."

But the new office was virtually orphaned at birth. Congress provided only seven million of the hundred million dollars requested by the Administration, which never made the office a top Presidential priority. The State Department has contributed fifteen officials who can manage overseas operations, but other agencies have offered nothing. The office thus has no ability to coördinate operations, such as mobilizing police trainers, even as Iraq and Afghanistan deteriorate and new emergencies loom in places like Darfur and Pakistan. It has become insiders' favorite example of bureaucratic inertia in the face of glaring need.

Frederick Barton, an expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, considers failures like these to be a prime cause of American setbacks in fighting global jihadism. "Hard power is not the way we're going to make an impression," he told me, and he cited Pakistan, where a huge population, rising militancy, nuclear weapons, and the remnants of Al Qaeda's leadership create a combustible mix. According to Barton's figures, since 2002 America has spent more than six billion dollars on buttressing the Pakistani military, and probably a similar amount on intelligence (the number is kept secret). Yet it has spent less than a billion dollars on aid for education and economic development, in a country where Islamist madrassas and joblessness contribute to the radicalization of young people. On a recent visit to Nigeria, Barton heard that American propaganda efforts are being outclassed by those of the Iranians and the Saudis. "What would Pepsi-Cola or Disney do?" he asked. "We're not thinking creatively, expansively. We are sclerotic, bureaucratic, lumbering—you can see the U.S. coming from miles away."

If, as Kilcullen says, the global counterinsurgency is primarily an information war, one place where American strategy should be executed is the State Department office of Karen Hughes, the Under-Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Hughes is a longtime Bush adviser from Texas. One of her first missions, in September, 2005, took her to the Middle East, where her efforts to speak with Muslim women as fellow-"moms" and religious believers received poor reviews. Last year, she sent out a memo to American embassies urging diplomats to make themselves widely available to the local press, but she also warned them against saying anything that might seem to deviate from Administration policy. The choice of a high-level political operative to run the government's global-outreach effort suggests that the Bush Administration sees public diplomacy the way it sees campaigning, with the same emphasis on top-down message discipline. "It has this fixation with strategic communications—whatever that is," an expert in public diplomacy with close ties to the State Department told me. "It's just hokum. When you do strategic communications, it fails, because nothing gets out." She cited a news report that the Voice of America wanted to produce on American-funded AIDS programs in Africa. The V.O.A. was told by a government official that the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coördinator would have to give its approval before anything could be broadcast. (The decision was later overruled.) "We're spending billions of dollars on AIDS," the expert said—an effort that could generate considerable gratitude in African countries with substantial Muslim populations, such as Somalia and Nigeria. "But no one in Africa has a clue."

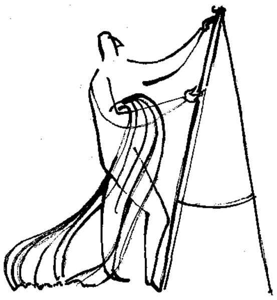
After the Cold War, the government closed down the United States Information Service and, with it, a number of libraries and cultural centers around the world. Since September 11th, there has been an attempt to revive such public diplomacy, but, with American embassies now barricaded or built far from city centers, only the most dedicated local people will use their resources. To circumvent this problem, the State Department has established what it calls American Corners—rooms or shelves in foreign libraries dedicated to American books and culture. "It's a good idea, but they're small and marginal," the expert said. She recently visited the American Corner in the main library in Kano, Nigeria, a center of Islamic learning. "I had to laugh," she said. "A few Africans asleep at the switch, a couple of computers that weren't working, a video series on George Washington that no one was using." She mentioned one encouraging new example of public diplomacy, funded partly by Henry Crumpton's office: Voice of America news broadcasts will begin airing next February in the language of Somalia, a country of increasing worry to counterterrorism officials. In general, though, there is little organized American effort to rebut the jihadist conspiracy theories that circulate daily among the Muslims living in populous countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, and Nigeria.

According to the expert, an American diplomat with years of experience identified another obstacle to American outreach. "Let's face it," he told her. "All public diplomacy is on hold till George Bush is out of office."

I once asked David Kilcullen if he thought that America was fundamentally able to deal with the global jihad. Is a society in which few people spend much time overseas or learn a second language, which is impatient with chronic problems, whose vision of war is of huge air and armor battles ended by the signing of articles of surrender, and which tends to assume that everyone is basically alike cut out for this new "long war"?

Kilcullen reminded me that there was a precedent for American success in a sustained struggle with a formidable enemy. "If this is the Cold War—if that analogy holds—then right now we're in, like, 1953. This is a long way to go here. It didn't all happen overnight—but it happened." The Cold War, he emphasized, was many wars, constructed in many different models, fought in many different ways: a nuclear standoff between the superpowers, insurgencies in developing countries, a struggle of ideas in Europe. "Our current battle is a new Cold War," Kilcullen said, "but it's not monolithic. You've got to define the enemy as narrowly as you can get away with."

President Bush has used the Cold War as an inspirational analogy almost from the beginning of the war on terror. Last month, in Riga, Latvia, he reminded an audience of the early years of the Cold War, "when freedom's victory was not so obvious or assured." Six decades later, he went on, "freedom in Europe has brought peace to Europe, and freedom has brought the power to bring peace to the broader Middle East." Bush's die-hard supporters compare him to Harry S. Truman, who was reviled in his last years in office but has been vindicated by history as a plainspoken visionary.



An Administration official pointed out that the President's speeches on the war are like the last paragraph of every Churchill speech from the Second World War: a soaring peroration about freedom, civilization, and darkness. But in Churchill's case, the official went on, nineteen pages of analysis, contextualization, and persuasion preceded that final paragraph. A Bush speech gives only the uplift—which suggests that there is no strategy beyond it. Bush's notion of a titanic struggle between good and evil, between freedom and those who hate freedom, recalls the rigid anti-Communism of Whittaker Chambers, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Barry Goldwater. Montgomery McFate noted that the current avatars of right-wing Cold Warriors, the neoconservatives, have dismissed all Iraqi insurgents as "dead enders" and "bad people." Terms like "totalitarianism" and "Islamofascism," she said, which stir the American historical memory, mislead policymakers into greatly increasing the number of our enemies and coming up with wrongheaded strategies against them. "That's not what the insurgents call themselves," she said. "If you can't call something by its name—if you can't say, 'This is what this phenomenon is, it has structure, meaning, agency'—how can you ever fight it?" In other words, even if we think that a jihadi in Yemen has ideas similar to those of an Islamist in Java, we have to approach them in discrete ways, both to prevent them from becoming a unified movement and because their particular political yearnings are different.

Kilcullen is attempting to revive a strain of Cold War thought that saw the confrontation with Communism not primarily as a blunt military struggle but as a subtle propaganda war that required deep knowledge of diverse enemies and civilian populations. By this standard, America's performance against radical Islamists thus far is dismal. Bruce Hoffman, of Georgetown University, a former RAND Corporation analyst who began to use the term "global counterinsurgency" around the same time as Kilcullen, pointed to two Cold War projects: RAND's study of the motivation and morale of the Vietcong in the mid-sixties, based on extensive interviews with prisoners and former insurgents, which led some analysts to conclude that the war was unwinnable; and a survey by Radio Free Europe of two hundred thousand émigrés from the East Bloc in the eighties, which used the findings to shape broadcasts. "We haven't done anything like that in this struggle," Hoffman said, and he cited the thousands of detainees in Iraq. "Instead of turning the prisons into insurgent universities, you could have a systematic process that would be based on scientific surveys designed to elicit certain information on how people joined, who their leaders were, how leadership was exercised, how group cohesion was maintained." In other words, America would get to know its enemy. Hoffman added, "Even though we say it's going to be the long war, we still have this enormous sense of impatience. Are we committed to doing the fundamental spadework that's necessary?"

Kilcullen's thinking is informed by some of the key texts of Cold War social science, such as Eric Hoffer's "The True Believer," which analyzed the conversion of frustrated individuals into members of fanatical mass movements, and Philip Selznick's "The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics," which described how Communists subverted existing social groups and institutions like trade unions. To these older theoretical guides he adds two recent studies of radical Islam: "Globalized Islam," by the French scholar Olivier Roy, and "Understanding Terror Networks," by Marc Sageman, an American forensic psychiatrist and former covert operator with the mujahideen in Afghanistan. After September 11th, Sageman traced the paths of a hundred and seventy-two alienated young Muslims who joined the jihad, and found that the common ground lay not in personal pathology, poverty, or religious belief but in social bonds. Roy sees the rise of "neo-fundamentalism" among Western Muslims as a new identity movement shaped by its response to globalization. In the margin of a section of Roy's book called "Is Jihad Closer to Marx Than to the Koran?" Kilcullen noted, "If Islamism is the new leftism, then the strategies and techniques used to counter Marxist subversion during the Cold War may have direct or indirect relevance to combating Al Qaeda-sponsored subversion."

Drawing on these studies, Kilcullen has plotted out a "ladder of extremism" that shows the progress of a jihadist. At the bottom is the vast population of mainstream Muslims, who are potential allies against radical Islamism as well as potential targets of subversion, and whose grievances can be addressed by political reform. The next tier up is a smaller number of "alienated Muslims," who have given up on reform. Some of these join radical groups, like the young Muslims in North London who spend afternoons at the local community center watching jihadist videos. They require "ideological conversion"—that is, counter-subversion, which Kilcullen compares to helping young men leave gangs. (In a lecture that Kilcullen teaches on counterterrorism at Johns Hopkins, his students watch "Fight Club," the 1999 satire about anti-capitalist terrorists, to see a radical ideology without an Islamic face.) A smaller number of these individuals, already steeped in the atmosphere of radical mosques and extremist discussions, end up joining local and regional insurgent cells, usually as the result of a "biographical trigger—they will lose a friend in Iraq, or see something that shocks them on television." With these insurgents, the full range of counterinsurgency tools has to be used, including violence and persuasion. The very small number of fighters who are recruited to the top tier of Al Qaeda and its affiliated terrorist groups are beyond persuasion or conversion. "They're so committed you've got to destroy them," Kilcullen said. "But you've got to do it in such a way that you don't create new terrorists."

When I asked him to outline a counter-propaganda strategy, he described three basic methods. "We've got to create resistance to their message," he said.

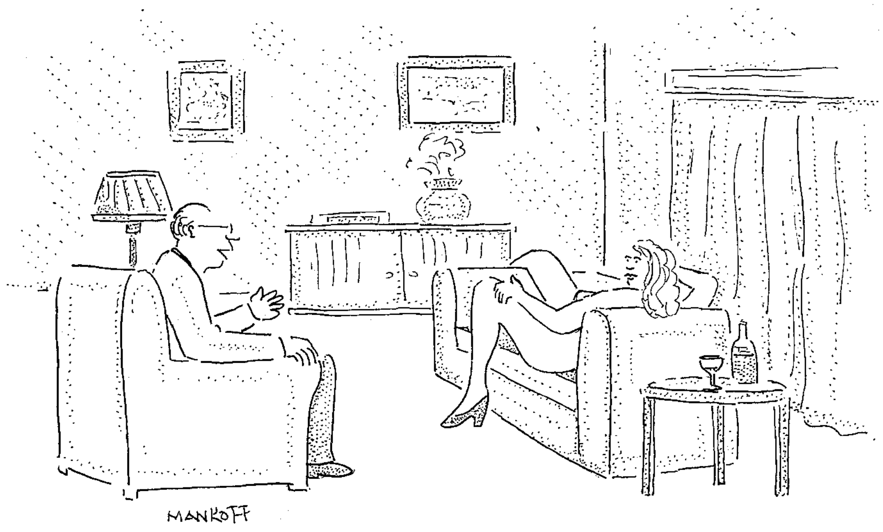
"We've got to co-opt or assist people who have a counter-message. And we might need to consider creating or supporting the creation of rival organizations." Bruce Hoffman told me that jihadists have posted five thousand Web sites that react quickly and imaginatively to events. In 2004, he said, a jihadist rap video called "Dirty Kuffar" became widely popular with young Muslims in Britain: "It's like Ali G wearing a balaclava and having a pistol in one hand and a Koran in the other." Hoffman believes that America must help foreign governments and civil-society groups flood the Internet with persuasively youthful Web sites presenting anti-jihadist messages—but not necessarily pro-American ones, and without leaving American fingerprints.

Kilcullen argues that Western governments should establish competing "trusted networks" in Muslim countries: friendly mosques, professional associations, and labor unions. (A favorite Kilcullen example from the Cold War is left-wing anti-Communist trade unions, which gave the working class in Western Europe an outlet for its grievances without driving it into the arms of the Soviet Union.) The U.S. should also support traditional authority figures—community leaders, father figures, moderate imams—in countries where the destabilizing transition to modernity has inspired Islamist violence. "You've got to be quiet about it," he cautioned. "You don't go in there like a missionary." The key is providing a social context for individuals to choose ways other than jihad.

Kilcullen's proposals will not be easy to implement at a moment when the government's resources and attention are being severely drained by the chaos in Iraq. And, if some of his ideas seem sketchy, it's because he and his colleagues have only just begun to think along these lines. The U.S. government, encumbered by habit and inertia, has not adapted as quickly to the changing terrain as the light-footed, mercurial jihadists. America's many failures in the war on terror have led a number of thinkers to conclude that the problem is institutional. Thomas Barnett, a military analyst, proposes dividing the Department of Defense into two sections: one to fight big wars and one for insurgencies and nation-building. Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired Army colonel and Colin Powell's former chief of staff, goes even further. He thinks that the entire national-security bureaucracy, which was essentially set in place at the start of the Cold War, is incapable of dealing with the new threats and should be overhauled, so that the government can work faster to prevent conflicts or to intervene early. "Especially in light of this Administration, but also other recent ones, do we really want to concentrate power so incredibly in the White House?" he asked. "And, if we do, why do we still have the departments, except as an appendage of bureaucracy that becomes an impediment?" In Wilkerson's vision, new legislation would create a "unified command," with leadership drawn from across the civilian agencies, which "could supplant the existing bureaucracy."

Since September 11th, the government's traditional approach to national security has proved inadequate in one area after another. The intelligence agencies habitually rely on satellites and spies, when most of the information that matters now, as Kilcullen pointed out, is "open source"—available to anyone with an Internet connection. Traditional diplomacy, with its emphasis on treaties and geopolitical debates, is less relevant than the ability to understand and influence foreign populations—not in their councils of state but in their villages and slums. And future enemies are unlikely to confront the world's overwhelming military power with conventional warfare; technology-assisted insurgency is proving far more effective. At the highest levels of Western governments, the failure of traditional approaches to counter the jihadist threat has had a paralyzing effect. "I sense we've lost the ability to think strategically," Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, the former chief of the British armed forces, has said of his government. He could have been describing the White House and the Pentagon.

Kilcullen's strategic mind, by contrast, seems remarkably febrile. I could call him at the office or at home at any hour of the night and he'd be jotting down ideas in one of his little black notebooks, ready to think out loud. Kilcullen, Crumpton, and their colleagues are desperately trying to develop a lasting new strategy that, in Kilcullen's words, would be neither Republican nor Democratic. Bruce Hoffman said, "We're talking about a profound shift in mind-set and attitude"—not to mention a drastic change in budgetary and bureaucratic priorities. "And that may not be achievable until there's a change in Administration." Kilcullen is now in charge of writing a new counterinsurgency manual for the civilian government, and early this month he briefed Condoleezza Rice on his findings in Afghanistan. But his ideas have yet to penetrate the fortress that is the Bush White House. Hoffman said, "Isn't it ironic that an Australian is spearheading this shift, together with a former covert operator? It shows that it's almost too revolutionary for the places where it should be discussed—the Pentagon, the National Security Council." At a moment when the Bush Administration has run out of ideas and lost control, it could turn away from its "war on terror" and follow a different path—one that is right under its nose. ◆



"What do you want, Denise? I'm not a mind reader."

From an upstairs window, I see my father walking away down his snowy lawn. He moves uncertainly, his hands cupped around his eyes like an Arctic explorer in a whiteout. It takes a moment to realize that he is peering through my mother's old Olympus camera, aiming it here and there. The set of his shoulders suggests dissatisfaction with what he sees this Christmas season: the bare apple trees, the frozen pond. Turning to face the house at last, he lowers himself onto one knee and pans across the stone exterior, slowly now.

My father, Dorie Friend, is a historian and a highly rational man; his Easter Island-size head is stuffed with knowledge. In our family, he was in charge of logic and money. He husbanded our declining fortunes—a decline that, as he recognized, mirrored the broader Wasp ebb, the outflow of maids and grandfather clocks and cocktail shakers brimming with gin.

My mother, who utterly ignored this decline, was in charge of everything else. She set the tone. Elizabeth Pierson Friend was Lib to her oldest friends, classmates at Smith who possessed all the graces. They were stylish and sparkling women, prepared by birth—and since birth—to charm the Burmese Ambassador, but Mom gave particularly good value. She took occasions so seriously. "After much ado," she e-mailed her friends about one party, "I had settled on a periwinkle blue dress: Fortuny-like silk pleats in a tea-length skirt, horizontal tucks in a long-sleeved tunic top. A necklace of eight strands, each a different size, of silver-gray freshwater pearls, twisted to almost choker length." Slim and vivacious and determined, with a pouf of chestnut hair and snapping blue eyes, she drew you out at the table, exclaiming at just the right moment, and her own conversation built to comic exclamations.

There was the story about how she had received a terrific rush in her early twenties, with a date every night, including a series with a tremendously tall young man who later supervised the secret bombing of Cambodia. And then, suddenly, the phone didn't ring for two weeks: "And I thought, *So this is menopause.*" There was the story about a trip to India, during which it became necessary for her to hide a suitor's turban in

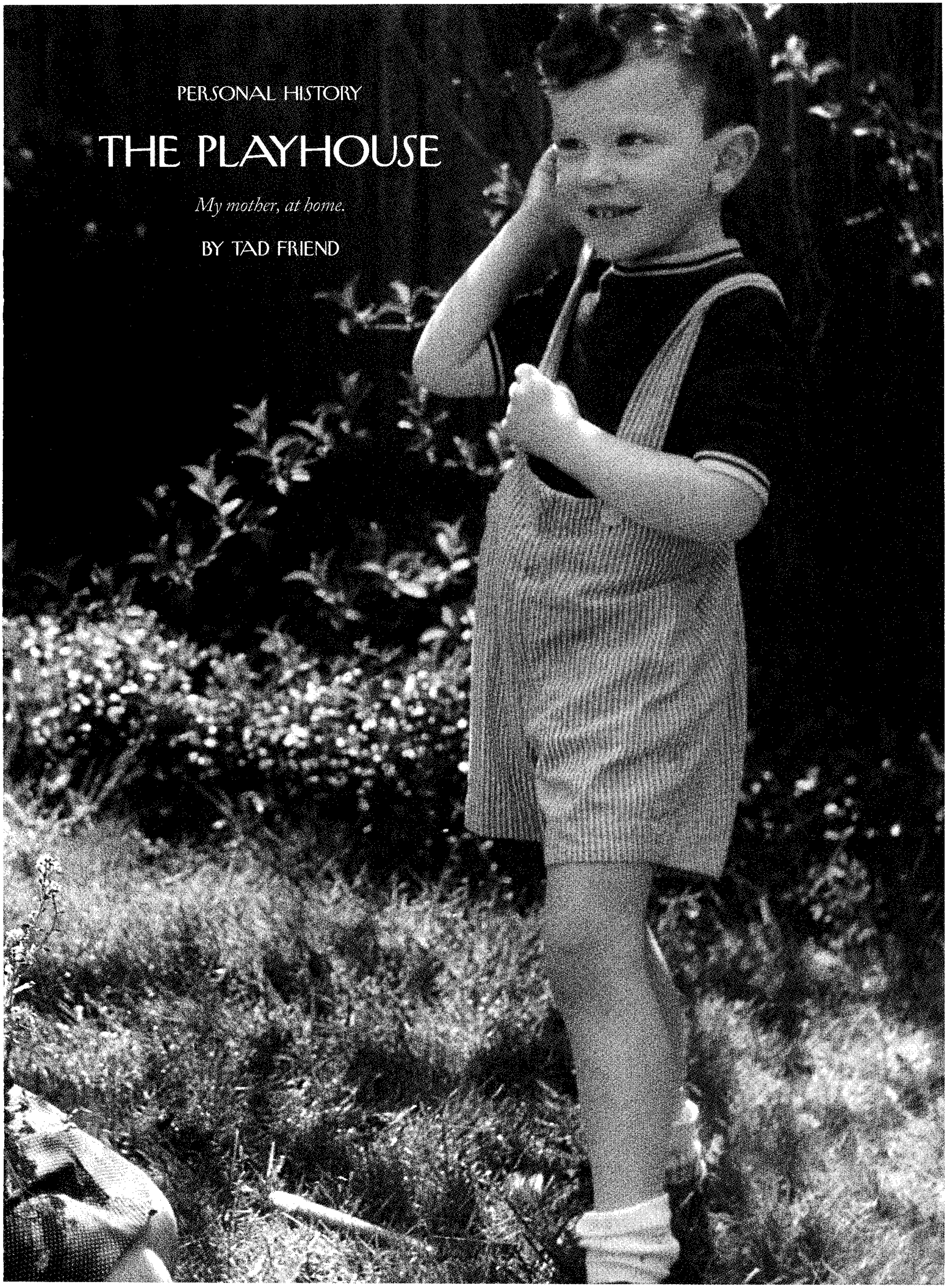
"Some mothers like to get down on the floor and fingerpaint with their children, and so fort

PERSONAL HISTORY

THE PLAYHOUSE

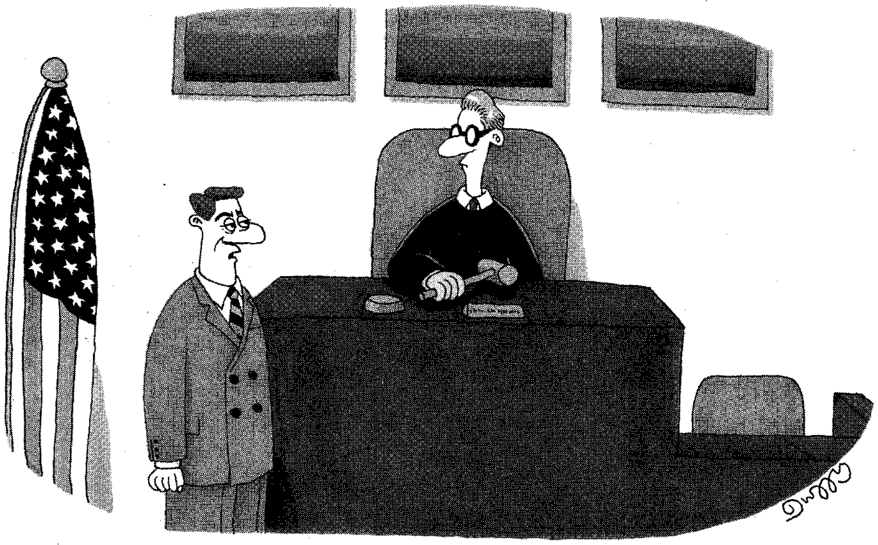
My mother, at home.

BY TAD FRIEND



ANNELIESE GARVER

mother told me when I was in my thirties, "but I was more interested in you when you started talking and becoming a person."



"Someday I'll catch you without your mallet, little man."

an icebox. Before you could wonder, Why an icebox, exactly?, she cried, "So there I was, dancing cheek to cheek with a Sikh!" When my father first heard that story—overheard it, actually, from an adjoining booth in a New Haven diner—he thought, Who is that horrible woman? When he heard it for the second time, years afterward, it was too late.

She spelled certain basic words as if she were Corsican (snug was "cosi"; gloves were "mittons"); trespassed wherever a stylish driveway beckoned; sobbed if she caught a bad cold. Her character was *chatoyant*, like a cat's eyes, candid and then suddenly bleached and desolate. But her darker recesses were usually masked by virtuosity: a gifted cook, painter, and designer, she had also shown early promise as a poet. As a sophomore at Smith, she came in second to Sylvia Plath in a poetry contest judged by W. H. Auden (who, when my mother was introduced to him a year later, delighted her by saying, "I believe I know your poems"). "Just as well I didn't win," she'd say. "Head in the oven, and so forth."

From time to time, I find myself studying a photograph of her taken in the summer of 1962, when she was pregnant with me, the first of her three children. She stands on the lawn in a blue maternity dress, looking pale and watchful. A soccer ball rests under her bare right foot. Soccer was my father's sport, and would be mine, but she liked to flash out into the yard and perform "the high trap." He would toss the ball high into the air and she would judge its fall perfectly and smother it with her right sole. And then, in triumph, depart to rule her own realm, which consisted of tomato sandwiches, gossip, bread-and-butter letters, strong handshakes, chore lists, and worrying.

It all fell under the heading of keeping the house in order, wherever the house was, culminating, in 1989, with this one in the Philadelphia suburb of Villanova: the house being photographed by my father. After years without a home to make her own—in Buffalo, in the sixties, my parents had no money to speak of, and then for nearly twenty years they lived first in an imposing pile belonging to Swarthmore College, when my father was the college's president, and then in a rented bungalow—this house was her epic work. An anonymous fieldstone relic at first, the place soon grew thick with her, with the snares and honeypots she concealed in plain sight: the bottom kitchen-drawer pull that rewarded you with a small, collapsible stepladder; the closets stuffed with Christmas gifts, so that you couldn't approach a doorknob without having her call out, from three rooms away, "Ooh, ooh—don't go in there!" Walking through the Villanova house was like reading a series of Rorschach blots that inked out her emotional history (except that she hated blots of any sort). She had it all planned, having long considered how best to arrange a house and its contents, including us.

Since she died, three years ago, my father has taken to photographing what remains. From his vantage on the lawn, he can see three facets of her hexagonal dining room; the stone wall rebuilt to set off two new decks of weathered, moleskin-colored ipe wood; and the glint from the nine windows on the south-facing "gallery," a sun-shot passageway that she lined with her own paintings. When the contractor installed bamboo blinds there, she exclaimed that the filtered light made the house look "so Japanesey!" From the next room, my father observed, "Elizabeth, there is no such word as 'Japanesey.'"

He can see the second-floor deck railing that she had rebuilt after she found her excitable Tibetan spaniel, Sam, poking his head between the palings—or, as she insisted, "poised to *hurl* himself to his death!" She took a tape measure to his five-inch-wide head and then had the pickets established a prudential three and a half inches apart. Sam lived a long life untroubled by further barks for help, and is now buried beneath the cut-leaf maple in the back. And my father can pick out the porthole window in his study in the former garage, a window placed low on the wall so that he could lie on his futon and look west at the very spot where he is now. The study appeared ten years into her campaign, a Trojan horse that surprised no one but him, for her clear intent had long been to surround his makeshift office in the entry hall with beauty until he surrendered the position. There was something inexorable about her, something of the Emperor Augustus, who said, "I found Rome brick, and left it marble."

My father, leaning now against Sam's maple, lowers the camera and closes his eyes.

In September of 1938, when my mother was not quite five, her father vanished. She was with her parents at the family beach house, in Wainscott, on the South Fork of Long Island, when he left a note for his wife saying only that he did not love her. A brilliant man with a Ph.D. in economics, John Herman Groesbeck Pierson went on to dedicate himself to utopian ideas: a theory of government-sponsored full employment that attracted a few powerful adherents—Hubert

Humphrey, for one—and then, as the political tides shifted, no adherents at all; a project to restore the Greek island of Syros by planting eighteen thousand trees which the local goats immediately began to veto. But he never realized the heroic promise of his youth.

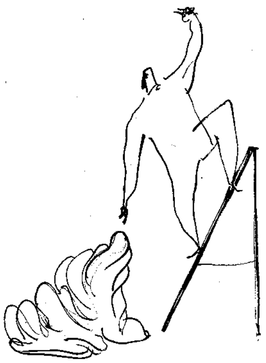
When my grandfather graduated from college, in 1927, a headline in the New Haven *Evening Register* declared "YALE RECORDS SHATTERED BY J.H.G. PIERSON." The article noted that he had won nine academic prizes, been president of Phi Beta Kappa, and composed the class poem, while also being a member of the cross-country, rifle, and soccer teams, of the student council, and of the Whiffenpoofs—"prizes and recognitions for almost every form of worthy activity that Yale men admire." Like his father and his brother Wilson, who had graduated the year before, John Pierson was at the top of his class. What's more, he had achieved the highest average—96.1—in the school's two-hundred-and-twenty-six-year history. "In the gigantic gathering sat the young man's father," the *Evening Register* reported, "and the envying eyes of hundreds of other fathers were turned on him, as the president made the announcement. The father's eyes glistened as he heard the president's words, and witnessed the glances directed at him by the assembled sons of Yale."

After killing a tiger with a single bullet in Uttar Pradesh during his postgraduate *Wanderjahr*, John Pierson went trophy-hunting in Hartford, Connecticut, and married Gertrude (Timmy) Robinson, a gorgeous, large-hearted, rather spoiled débutante known to some in the Pierson family as "the Hartford Butterfly." When Grandma Tim gave birth to my mother at New Haven Hospital, in 1933, Grandpa John stayed at the curb with the chauffeur, smoking a cigar. And that, essentially, is where he remained. His signature bit of fatherly business was crawling beneath the rug made from the skin of his tiger and growling at my mother and her younger brother. He called her Weenie, sometimes rhyming it "Weenie, weenie, little wahine." He had been to Hawaii and seen the wahines, the women surfers. There was always a restlessness.

That September, days after he left the Wainscott beach house, the hurricane of '38 hit it without warning. The hurricane killed six hundred people and destroyed ten thousand houses across Long Island and New England. My mother watched from an upstairs window as the black sea surged over Georgica Pond and battered the front porch. Wilson Pierson shepherded his wife and his brother's family and the servants—nine people in all—out the side door and into a Buick 8. As Grandma Tim dashed to the car, a rosebush raked across her face, drawing blood that her children would remember as a scarlet emblem of the storm. The road out was swamped, so they drove two hundred yards to marginally higher ground and waited. Only after the floodwaters had lapped above the running boards did the wind finally relent.

My grandfather remained incommunicado for a year. It turned out that he had suffered a nervous breakdown, and had been seeing a Freudian analyst four days a week. He came home, but the marriage continued to founder. Grandma Tim went to the analyst's office and pressed him for a prognosis; when he finally declared that "your husband is incurable," she stripped off one of her gloves and threw it in his face. Then she moved to Vermont. The split led, awkwardly, to new arrangements. My grandmother decided to remarry, but she told her children only the day before the wedding; my grandfather, who had moved to Washington, D.C., also remarried, and informed his children by letter. In the years that followed, his children saw him only rarely.

After my father proposed to my mother, in 1959, he sought the approval of his prospective father-in-law as the two men walked on the stony beach at the foot of Grandpa John's house in Riverside, Connecticut. Approval was forthcoming, but Grandpa John believed it his duty to mention that my mother had been rather indulged and might prove a disappointment. My father, who had experience with disenchantment, said that that was all right. His Pittsburgh family had had a birthright of yachts and private mausoleums until his father drank and gambled the last of it away; his mother had kissed the film star Ronald Colman in a taxicab before she married his father, and other men, in other taxicabs, after.



My mother never felt indulged; on the contrary. For the rest of her life, the hurricane—and the affiliated sense of abandonment—kept whirling through her thoughts. It was her primary organizing event. When she had a headache or had been bruised by a frank conversation, she dragged around in her nightgown, looking conspicuously wounded. She squirrelled away leftovers of her favorite desserts—almond cake, lace cookies; anything my brother or I might otherwise scavenge—in a tin beneath her bed. And all her life she lamented that she had never seen a full moon; when my father pointed one out, she would glance up and say, "No, not quite full."

Deprivation was passed down like an heirloom. One night when we were young, Mom divided up a cheesecake for dessert, and my brother said, "I'm not going to complain, but I got the smallest piece." She repeated this, teasingly, showing us how it was funny. Over the years, that non-complaint complaint became a family watchword, usually directed toward Mom, who maintained no barrier between thought—*that's not the way I would have done it*—and declaration. She would come into the kitchen after I'd finished cooking a summer dinner of chicken, corn on the cob, and rice, and remark, "Hmm. Two starches." She just thought I would want to know. The correct, almost formal reply: "I'm not going to complain, but…"

When we were young and Grandpa John was coming for a visit, Mom would bake for days and polish the silver until it reflected our own scrubbed faces. On arrival, he would hug us gingerly, as if embraces were a foreign custom that had in all decency to be observed, and he and my father, each in his tweed jacket, would grip each other by the upper arms in a sort of Greco-Roman standoff. Then they would sit and talk politely, knowledgeably, about Zen. Mom always had a starched napkin ready the instant the small talk died. One of her happiest memories of childhood was how Grandpa John would fold a linen napkin into the shape of a mouse and, by flexing his forearm, make it scamper up his sleeve. "Now, Daddy," she would ask, as we looked on eagerly, "can you remember the mouse?"

“I don’t think so,” he’d say, frowning as he bent the napkin this way and that and finally, doubtfully, placed the would-be animal on his jacket sleeve. There it would sit until he twitched it aside with a cough.

Mom’s dressing room in the Villanova house contained eleven photographs of Grandpa John. The hallway bureau upstairs showcased a photo of him in tropical khakis and a topee, crouched over his tiger with a rifle in his hands. Perhaps because his face was in shadow, the scene invited you to try to pick out prophetic marks of character. You could imagine that if the photographer had asked him to step into the light everything would have fallen out differently. Last Christmas, my father said that if anyone wanted to take the Grandpa John photos away he’d be relieved.

In college and thereafter, winter vacations truly began when Mom raced to meet me at the door, crying, “Darling!” She had a light, pattering step, and her voice, with its vibrant stresses and schwas, called to mind Katharine Hepburn’s; Grandma Tim had been a childhood friend of Hepburn’s, and attended the same elocution classes. After a hug that left an imprint of Chanel No. 5, and a bit of hostessing—“Would you like some milk? Tea? Some lovely, cool grapes?”—she would display her latest coup, such as the hand-painted three-quarter-scale powder-room sink she’d carried on her lap on the plane from *Al*-buquerque! Ta-da! She would do a Charleston step or two in triumph.

Whenever anyone rang the bell, Mom would shanghai him or her, be it beloved son or bewildered Girl Scout, into a house tour. These lasted almost forever: like Russian dolls, her rooms held stories nested within larger stories. En route to that sink, for instance, she’d see the ironwood chest she’d found in Seoul and be reminded that when she’d received her MasterCard bill she’d become convinced that she had made a killing on the exchange rate at the dealer’s expense. Later, when she couldn’t make the dealer see how he’d shortchanged himself—“I placed an *international* call, but, nonetheless . . .”—she had made a compensatory donation to a Korean eye hospital. The logic was characteristic, as was the punctilio, as was the guilt, as was the belief that she could have inadvertently cheated an antique dealer.

As December wore on, the tours grew in festivity, as if the house were auditioning for the pageant at Radio City. Before she had the Villanova place, my mother’s nesting fever broke every Christmas in a flurry of wreath-hanging and Norway-spruce-trundling and crèche-building—the Christ child’s tiny wicker bassinet would, on Christmas morning, be found to have given birth to a carved chunk of walnut swaddled in cotton batting. She orchestrated feasts of turkey tetrazzini and crème caramel or ginger duck with potato gratin and almond cake, made ahead so that the kitchen appeared pristine. (When asked the menu, she would reply, as her mother and grandmother had, “Piffle pudding with wait-and-see sauce.”) These exquisite brown meals seemed chosen to be visually neutral, the better to set off the table’s gleaming silver and its red Dutch-oven centerpiece, filled for the season with huge pinecones.

On Christmas morning, my mother always had twice as many presents as the rest of us. She was at pains to find just the right thing for her numerous friends and they repaid her in kind. Yet giving her anything was a tense business; although she depended on social fibs, when it came to aesthetics she had an artist’s ruthlessness. A mahogany wall sconce I made for her in eighth grade vanished into the attic lickety-split. It was a handsome thing as sconces go, but in her house sconces went. Many of my father’s Christmas presents to her didn’t measure up, either—I recall her unwrapping a large crystal unicorn in distressed silence. Even his engagement gift to her, a Rouault lithograph of a mother and child, wound up in the attic.

And so Christmas Eve, that moment of pure anticipation, was my favorite part of the holiday. We concluded our rituals by reading Beatrix Potter’s “The Tailor of Gloucester” aloud, passing the book, a 1931 edition from my mother’s childhood, hand to hand. We pretty much had it memorized, though. The tailor, “a little old man in spectacles, with a pinched face, old crooked fingers, and a suit of thread-bare clothes,” is making a silk coat for the mayor of Gloucester, who is to be married shortly, on Christmas Day. After laying out the pieces of the coat on his worktable one evening, the tailor goes home, where he hears rapping sounds from a set of teacups overturned on the sideboard: “*Tip tap, tip tap, tip tap tip!*” When he flips over the cups, he discovers that each hides a mouse trapped by the tailor’s cat, Simpkin. We always chimed the best bits aloud, and our favorite was these distress signals. It must have been Potter’s favorite, too, for she repeated it four times: “*Tip tap, tip tap, tip tap tip!*”

Once the mice scamper off, the tailor takes to his bed with a high fever and is delirious for several days. On Christmas morning, he creeps through the snow to his shop and finds, to his amazement, that the coat is fully assembled. The mice have sewn it for him. My mother could never read this passage—“oh joy! the tailor gave a shout”—without tears springing to her eyes, so we would tacitly arrange the reading order to give her the tip-taps. Or we could carry her through by chorusing the ending, where Potter discloses that thereafter the tailor becomes famous for his stitchery: “The stitches of those button-holes were so small—*so* small—they looked as if they had been made by little mice!”

My earliest memories of my mother don’t actually include her. Between us, almost always, were the palings of baby gates and playpens. I was the youngest criminal in America, banging my cup on the bars and shouting for the warden—which only earned me more time in the hole.

Visiting hours were at night, when she would arrange me in the bathtub—bar of soap, red washcloth, No More Tears shampoo—and glide off with instructions to “sing out every once in a while, so I know you haven’t drowned.” Busy piloting my imaginary friends around in my little red motorboat, I would not sing out. There was the joy when she came in to check, that moment, even if she was cross. Sometimes she would cry “Boop boop!” and gather me up in the big blue towel, kissing the crown of my head. Sometimes. Feeling that I had failed to delight her, I became a quiet, seething child. Having my tonsils out, at four, was a rare happy memory. I awoke in the hospital early in the morning, my throat aching, and saw my mother in a pale shaft of sunlight. She was asleep in a chair by the bed, her right hand stilled on my blanket in mid-caress. I fought sleep to keep my eyes on her, arrested just so.

Once my brother and sister came along, four and six years after me, she gradually began to get the hang of it, motherhood. When I was eleven, my father became the very busy president of Swarthmore and the family dynamic shifted: the polarities of absence. Her house had always been a private museum that she kept free of traffic by requiring her children to take afternoon naps until we were twelve, thirteen, amazingly old. Now she began to relax her admission policies. She would seek us out with birthday and Valentine's Day cards that said only "Guess who?" signed with a tiny rounded "M," for "Mom," like a gull's wings. But by then we had taken to sulking in the farthest corners to escape her, her absence as well as her enormous presence, her inability to enter a room and simply allow whatever was going on to continue. Very often, the first child she saw would be haled into a chore that she presented as a delightful opportunity: "Who would like to empty the dishwasher?" We exuded surliness as squids squirt ink, trying to get away in the darkness. Her pride in us was inordinate, nonetheless. It felt buoying in private, but in public it flashed out in alarming ways. The spring of my senior year in high school, she took me to Jos. A. Bank and asked the salesman, brightly, "Do you have a pair of pants for a young man who's going to Harvard?"

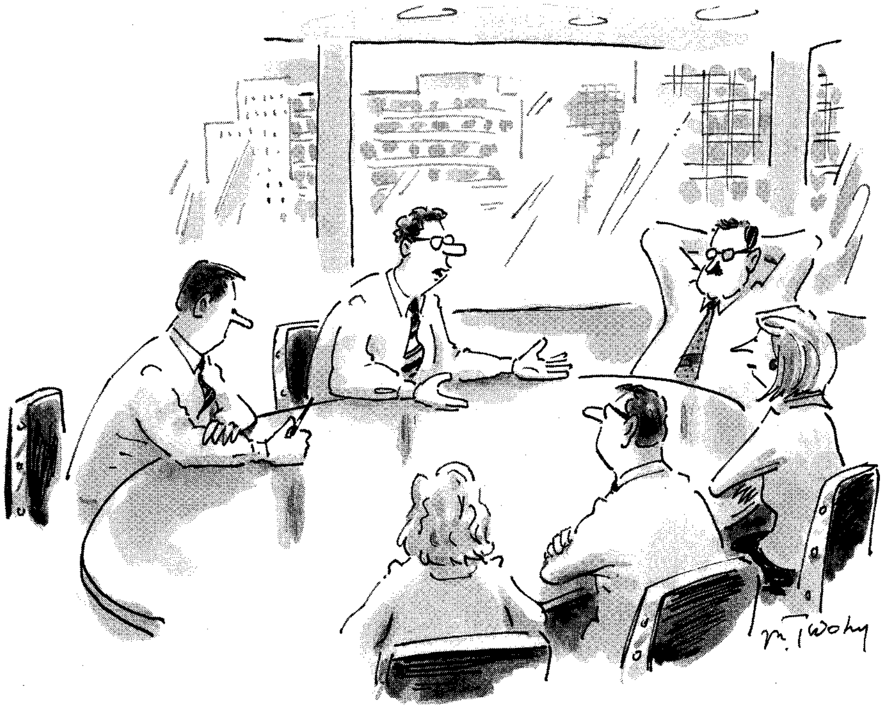
As she became more independent, she began to paint. She started with acrylics, a medium in which she could endlessly rework the plumb lines, adding depth to her eggplants and cantaloupes and her Spode blue-and-white Gloucester tea service, glossing her still-lifes with slants of afternoon sun. As her confidence grew, she moved on to watercolors, where all plotting must be hazarded on an irreversible act. Her titles delineated a bright, domestic world: "Blue and White," "The Blue Cow," "The Blue Colander," "The Red Dining Room." She treated blue and white (and, as an accent, red) the way that Bach treated melody: she wove them through every set of dishes, every coverlet, every room, so that her house became a spatial partita, a walking fugue. Yet my favorite of her paintings—it hangs just off my kitchen—is one she called "Big Lemons." The title suggests deadpan intent: four lemons bulk like boulders in white ramekins, stunned by their own surpassing tartness. A devotee of color and line, she had more difficulty conveying movement. When she painted people—my brother; my father; the dog, Sam—they were shown asleep. The living, too, suited her best in repose.

Years later, when I was in my thirties, I broached all this with her one afternoon as we sat on the beach in Wainscott, trying to get at the banked ferocity between us. There was so much we shared: the tone—playful, sometimes acid—the Pierson jaw, the gab at parties, the inconsolability. And yet. My birth had meant that she had had to relinquish work and worldly achievement, but she didn't mention that. She did acknowledge, trailing her fingers through the sand, that she hadn't been quite ready for me. "Some mothers like to get down on the floor and fingerpaint with their children, and so forth," she said, "but I was more interested in you when you started talking and becoming a person. I'm afraid I left you alone a good deal when you were small." Brightening, she added, "But the result is that you learned to read very early—and now you're a writer!" I laughed, and, after a startled moment, so did she. Her determination to quell my objections with her pride in me was both masterly and oddly endearing.

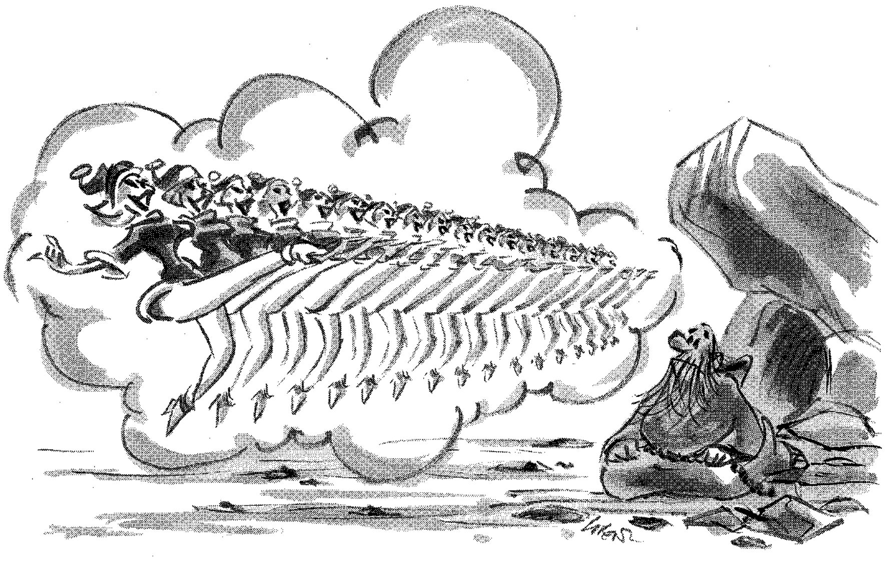
The Villanova property was in some ways a compromise. My mother had wanted a sun-filled modern home, but my father insisted on heritage, which was cheaper. They wound up with a two-hundred-year-old farmer's house on the corner of an old estate. The two-acre plot came with a brook and a pond and more than a hundred trees, including, looming over the roof, a sugar maple whose boughs my parents knit together with steel cables that Mom gazed at fearfully in high winds.

As for the house itself...her kinder friends merely murmured, "Oh, Libby!" If it had been up to my father, the décor might have remained as it was, the drab walls and penitential twin beds of reflexive Wasp style. But over the next decade Mom corralled all the talents and energies that she had poured into painting and needlepoint and being a college president's wife, and hitched them to the house, dragging it to the place her imagination foresaw.

Three sets of architects were called in to realize her ideas, eleven major projects in all, each of which she had drawn up without allowing for such blemishing inconveniences as ventilation equipment or



"We can't say 'new and improved' until we come up with a product."



THE TEMPTATION OF ST. NICHOLAS

• •

smoke alarms. When she was reminded of these necessities, her lips would set, and then, switching on her twin high beams—one of charm, one of acute distress—she would bulldoze the architects into making it all work. Three small bedrooms became the master suite, the old kitchen became a mudroom, a passageway became a bar. Above the bar she carved a pass-through so you could relay glasses to the new kitchen, a festive command center with ribbons of shelves and a blue-and-white Portuguese tile backsplash. Between the kitchen and the dining room she hung sliding barn doors on iron braces, so that you could close off the kitchen when you had catered dinners, and no one would be the wiser. Of course, there weren't any catered dinners, and the sliding doors slid only on the house tours; the whole idea was a revenant wish from a bygone way of life. (Her mother and stepfather's dairy farm in Vermont had had four tumbledown barns, and there had been live-in help, too, before the picturesque but impractical cows ruminated their way through much of the family fortune.) So, too, the tea bench outside where you could take a cup of Earl Grey and admire the sunset had few twilight visitors, and the hall closet designed to hold precisely eight folding chairs for a Midsummer Night's Eve feast under the apple trees held them fast, in readiness.

My father, aside from frowningly monitoring the cost and halting construction whenever the sums became too preposterous—delays she chafed at, hating parsimony—ended up leaving most of the details to her. His taste was earthier; by surrendering on any number of other points, he was finally able to persuade her to preserve the rough stone of two internal walls that she had intended to plaster over. One of my mother's friends, observing her tenacity in these struggles, and seeing her as a chatelaine on a par with E. M. Forster's Mrs. Wilcox, took to calling the house "Dorie's End."

My father liked to walk the grounds, to supervise the koi in the pond and return with an armload of wood, but my mother preferred her nature domesticated. When she created a garden behind her bedroom, she bounded it with locust posts topped by copper caps like upside-down pie tins and filled it with dwarf cherry and tiny cypress and a miniature pine that popped out of a blue-and-white pot. The centerpiece was a stone bull that she hoped future grandchildren would ride. This secret garden turned the out-of-doors into a drawing room. At the same time, by some alchemy, the house was opened up to the out-of-doors, made into the sunny villa she had always wanted. She detested darkness and confining spaces—the womb, Buick 8s in a storm, the grave.

When you marry two families, the Friends and the Piersons, that have lived for generations in houses with dumbwaiters and coal scuttles and all manner of oddities, the marriage carries with it a staggering heritage of bric-a-brac that has no bearing on modern life—the junk DNA that gets handed down alongside the useful genes. Our inherited silver alone included mint-julep spoons, bouillon spoons, demitasse spoons, a stuffing spoon, a berry spoon, a pea spoon, sugar tongs, a butter pick, a pickle fork, a lettuce fork, a cocoa pot, salt tubs, and an egg warmer. Most of these antic materials were eventually stored or sold, but a few with strong associations became part of the mix. My mother's idea was to both acknowledge and subdue the past—her past, particularly—by giving it a cameo role among her present pleasures. In the living room, she placed her mother's silver gravy boat and travel alarm clock on a table alongside a maple burl and a bowl of marble eggs and shells. Fond of spheres, she also filled a decorative box of ancestral carpet balls and then counterpoised it on the table against a box of wicker *takraw* balls from Asia and another box of wooden balls she'd painted to resemble Fabergé eggs. Looking down on the table were an oil painting by Guy Pène du Bois that showed Grandma Tim in her glamorous twenties and, on an adjoining wall, ten of her mother's own ink drawings. Each room was intended as a comforting Joseph Cornell box, and the living room was a wonder cabinet dedicated to the Hartford Butterfly.

The house began to resemble one of the virtual-memory palaces imagined by the Greeks as an aid to recollection. My mother was terrified of Alzheimer's disease—Grandma Tim had died of it—so memory-laden talismans were a source of tremendous comfort. If you lingered by the silver menagerie, she would hand you the small elephant that she had acquired in 1968 through her acquaintance with Connie Mangskau, a Bangkok antique dealer. Connie Mangskau had asked Mom to carry a letter to a dealer across the border in Siem Reap: "Just an innocent little old letter, she said." When my mother handed the Cambodian dealer the padded envelope, he sliced it open and tipped out a pile of diamonds. In appreciation, he invited her to take a memento from his shop, and, while she was *furious* at Connie Mangskau, she had finally picked out this elephant, but later she was *furious* at herself for not picking out the much larger one nearby, an elephant the size of a basketball!

She would explain, in passing, that she had first met Connie Mangskau in 1955, when she'd spent a year in Bangkok teaching English to Thai businessmen before pursuing her master's in English, at Yale. But really she'd gone there to get to know her father, who was working in Thailand for the United Nations. Her plane was late arriving at the Bangkok airport, and Grandpa John, vexed, greeted her by saying, "You know, I'm not going to be able to spend much time with you this year."

Driven to whisk everything unsightly away, she also, like an underappreciated magician, had to coax applause by demonstrating how the trick was done. A rolltop panel in the kitchen, an "appliance garage," would be raised to display the huddled coffeemaker, Cuisinart, and blender. And my father grumbled about how she herded visitors into his bathroom to show off the louvred cabinet that hid—ta-da!—his drying jockstraps. She designed as if she were on a ship, where space is scant and items may have to be battened down in a storm. Some of her nooks and cubbies were so small—*so* small—they looked as if they had been made by little mice.

My sister suggested that Mom start a business designing tiny spaces and call it Martha Store-It. But Mom couldn't have endured anyone else's inexactitude. Before laying out her kitchen drawers, she took a tape measure to a variety of bread loaves and determined that three of them would fit snugly in a drawer that was five inches high, seventeen inches wide, and eighteen inches deep. And she had a group of architects sit in a circle while she measured the mean length of their shins to determine the proper depth of a Japanese tea well for my father's study (sixteen and a half inches).

Following her everywhere as she paced and measured was Sam. When she shopped for pile rugs or a bellows, he perched in the passenger seat of her Honda with an expectant look whose acuity was not increased by the fact that one of his eyes was brown and the other blue. Like her, he was a cat in dog's clothing. But he did bark rapturously whenever she returned. I was jealous of Sam, of their mutual adoration.

Sam's wicker basket in the mudroom was a perfect replica of her Christmas bassinet for the Christ child, only at 100X. When she first showed Sam the new basket, thoughtfully positioned near his water and food bowls, he made two anxious circles inside it and then threw up. He preferred to sleep in my parents' bedroom, because the eccentric heating system blew gusts of hot air toward their bed while leaving the upstairs rooms, where we slept, meatlocker cold. Sam would lie by the vent with his front paws formally arrayed, like the stone lions in front of the New York Public Library, the mistral fanning his fur.

Sam's waywardness echoed Mom's inability to follow her own dispositions. Though she had designed a phone-booth-size study for herself off the master bedroom, she preferred to answer mail and tackle problems from one of at least six other places in the house. Each of these areas overflowed with catalogues and *Architectural Digests*, from which she'd grab ideas for cabinets and cubbies, which were no sooner built than they, too, overflowed with catalogues and *Architectural Digests*. After she died, my siblings and I went through the epic scatter of her files, trying to decipher her system. Her system turned out to be stacking or bundling all the stray paper within reach on a given day. In her computer, I found a poem that she'd written recently on the sly, her first real poem in nearly fifty years. Among its lines were the following:

My house specializes in these challenges.
Bags of mail I did not ask to receive
Choke the floor of the linen closet.
A photograph of me, holding a baby on a
  beach.
But which beach and, for that matter,
  which baby?
A Japanese chest whose bottom drawer
  has irresponsibly locked itself,
And who can remember where I put the
  key?

In the summer of 1995, my mother, at the age of sixty-one, finally asked her father, then nearly ninety and suffering from Parkinson's disease, why he'd kept leaving. She placed him on a built-in sofa at the center of a house designed, in a sense, in anticipation of his return; here was lovingly gathered all the best that she and Grandma Tim had had to offer. She spoke in her determined way, with a premonitory toss of her head that indicated both her wish not to offend and her intention to carry on regardless. She began with the hurricane and worked up to the airport in Bangkok, the years of feeling that she was a disappointment. "Oh, Weenie," Grandpa John said at last. "I'm sorry I was such a skunk."

In her pride and relief at having spoken, she did not focus on the feebleness of his response. A few days later, still buoyant, she discovered a lump in her left breast. The mastectomy revealed that the cancer had metastasized into thirteen of her lymph nodes. After radiation and chemotherapy, she underwent an experimental regimen of stem-cell replacement and high-dose chemotherapy that almost killed her. For a year, there was napping, and constant nausea, and an auburn wig.

And then she was back. She had stopped feeling unappreciated, mostly; my father, equally unexpectedly, had arisen from his books to take care of her. They had never been closer. She let her hair grow back short and gray, and looked like a wise elf (an impression only accentuated, in a funny sort of way, when she had a face-lift not long after). Proud of these hard-won victories, she would correct anyone who congratulated her on being in remission—a word that, to her, suggested that the cancer was merely in abeyance, tucked away. She was *cured.*

My own showdown with her, a few years later, was not planned—at least, I didn't plan it. I was visiting at Thanksgiving in 1999, and she asked whether there were any romantic prospects; just then, there weren't. (It was nearly a year before I met Amanda, who became my wife.) She quickly touched on another mutual sore point: the analysis I had been in for four years. "I think it might just be too much therapy," she said. "You can think about these things too much, and be paralyzed." This was an idée fixe of hers: everything would improve if I just stopped analysis. It was striking how much, in this, she resembled my insurance company.

"Do I seem happier to you than when I started?" I said.

"Oh, yes, much," she said.

"So why would you want me to stop before I'm done?" I was trying to take charge of the discussion, but we were in her living room, and I was slumped in her custom-designed armchair, upholstered in blue-and-white batik, with my feet on her ottoman. It's hard to hold court when you can't plant your feet on the floor.

"You know, I was in analysis for two years, a long time ago, and it was that that made me feel I could be married," she said.

"I didn't know that." For Wasps, we spent a lot of time murmuring to Jews.

"But you do have to get on with your life at a certain point."

I scowled, but stopped myself from saying, "Two more years and you might even have felt you could have children."

Following her own train of thought, she continued, "I like about ninety-five per cent of your character very much. There's five per cent that I don't like, and I know that five per cent is important to you, and I know you blame me for it, but I don't understand it."

"That's a terrible thing to say," I said, not wanting to know what, exactly, that five per cent was. I suspect it was the part that had not entirely forgiven her.

She went on to lament that my brother and sister were elsewhere that weekend, and that I came down so infrequently from New York. "We have this beautiful lawn here, perfect for two soccer teams of grandchildren," she said. "And there aren't any grandchildren. I'd always thought my children would live nearby, just down the road, and would be over all the time. But everyone lives so far away."

"And why do you think that is?" I said.

She began to cry. I felt sorry, and guilty, and started crying myself. Sam trotted into the room then and looked worriedly back and forth. She gathered him up and wept into his fur.

The following year, she launched her culminating campaign, a nifty, tripartite maneuver. She had always wanted my father to have a proper study, but she also needed to remove his desk and filing cabinets from the front hall, where they gave visitors a hodgepodgy first impression, rather than the desired Japanesey effect. With him gone, that space would become a new entrance hall, a tiny powder room, and a playroom for the future grandchildren. Having redesigned the garage as his office, she attached it to the house with a passageway she called "The Link." He didn't think The Link necessary, in part because of the expense—which she ended up paying for out of the money from her mother's farm, house begetting house—and in part because he declared himself happy to walk outside to get to his study. "Oh, now, Dorie," she said. "You won't be happy trudging through snow up to your knees." She understood that his stoicism was reflexive, a fear of self-indulgence. But it was also vital to her that the new wing be connected, that the house encompass us all.

Wild with excitement about "the playhouse," as she called it, for two years she talked of little else. She filled its shelves with books from Grandma Tim's childhood (Howard Pyle) and hers (the complete Beatrix Potter) and ours ("Where the Wild Things Are"). There was a sunlit reading nook by a bay window, a little drawing table that slid out from beneath it, a corkboard, and a peekaboo TV. Yet the room seemed intended less for toddlers than for Mom herself. Its furnishings included one of her mother's Sheridan love seats that she had upholstered in easy-to-ruin gray trapunto, two large bolsters in even-easier-to-ruin blue-and-white Marimekko, and two enormous ginger jars steadied on wooden disks. The sliding door that would keep the children penned in had a porthole to allow for adult observation (there they are, still not playing with the enormous ginger jars). The ceiling was a Prussian blue, covered with stencilled stars and comets and a single crescent moon.

The first potential playhouse user and soccer player, my brother's son, came along at last, and in the spring of 2001 Grandpa John celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday by holding the baby in his arms. Trembling in his wheelchair, he murmured to his great-grandson, "Be the best at what you do, and be kind to those who are not." Six months later, he was dead. The following spring, Mom sent me a photo of a baby polar bear curled up on its mother's back on an ice floe. Both bears were asleep and seemed entirely contented in their landscape of blue and white. "Dearest Taddio," she wrote. "Since I was a tiny child, Daddy and I sent pictures of animals to each other. When I saw the enclosed I wanted to send it to him. But since that is no longer possible I'm sending it to you instead. With much love, Mom."

Sam had by now become lame, deaf, and almost blind. His existence was reduced to indiscriminate licking, hopeful expressions of love for whatever open palm or chair leg came near. When Amanda and I were married at the family house in Wainscott, in September, 2002, Sam, who had always loved to sprint down its lawn, his belly whistling through the grass like a hydrofoil, had to stay at a kennel. In the months before the wedding, Mom kept e-mailing us reports from the *Farmers' Almanac* and "hurricane forecast experts" that predicted a devastating blow. She bought a hundred and fifty ponchos for the guests, and put them aside—that is, in a huge, attention-getting box near the front door—just in case. That the wedding day dawned sunny and mild was due, she felt, to this precaution. She danced on the lawn until the last song, adoring it all.

My parents picked up Sam on their way home. They took him back to the house, fed and walked him, and stroked his thinning corona of fur. At dawn, they found his body stretched out in The Link, still warm.

In June of 2003, I took Mom to the hospital at the University of Pennsylvania for an outpatient procedure on her bladder. In the car afterward, still dreamy from the anesthesia, she told me about her first period. It had arrived when she was fifteen and riding the Long Island Rail Road. In every way unprepared for this calamity, she had locked herself in the bathroom and sobbed. It was an odd conversation for us to be having, and yet I remember thinking, This is how we should be talking, calmly and intimately, just two adults discussing their periods. We bowled home, laughing.

She began to recover from the operation—and then to fail, rapidly. One morning she just fell down. My father called and said that she wanted to speak with me but had wanted him to prepare me for how she sounded. She got on and said, "He . . . llo, Tad-di-o . . ." Her clarion voice was slurred and quavery. I tried to make a casual reply, but we each heard the other's alarm—the fear of impairment, of dwindling.

She checked back into the hospital, where tests determined that the mitral valve of her heart had become clogged with a strange putty-like material, flecks of which had passed into her brain. The root problem remained mysterious. As the doctors ran more tests, we tried to brighten Mom's surroundings, to distract her from the applesauce, the beige walls whose color she termed "baby couldn't help it." My sister rubbed her feet with citrus lotions, and I brought in Malta, the small red bear that she'd given me as a child, which always travelled with any family member who was going on a long trip. Antibiotics began to alleviate her strokelike symptoms, and in a few days she was sitting up and making plans to attend my sister's wedding, two months off, declaring, "I'll be borne in on a palanquin!" She began hostessing the nurses—"Have you met my daughter-in-law, who writes for the New York *Times*?"—and apologizing to everyone for her unwashed hair. As Amanda and I left for the train, she was trying to find "Sex and the City" on television, and I told her that the hospital didn't have HBO. "Well, how do they expect anyone to get better in here if they can't watch 'Sex and the City'?" she said.

The doctors decided that her mitral valve ought to be replaced. When I called the night before the operation, my sister picked up and said that a rehabilitation therapist had just taken Mom for a short walk down the hall. When she got back, I told her, "I hear you were running up and down the stairs like a mountain goat."

"Oh, yes," she said instantly, "leaping from crag to crag."

The next morning, as they were rolling her in, Malta somehow vanished from her pajama pocket. And that afternoon, after they stitched her up, her heart just stopped.

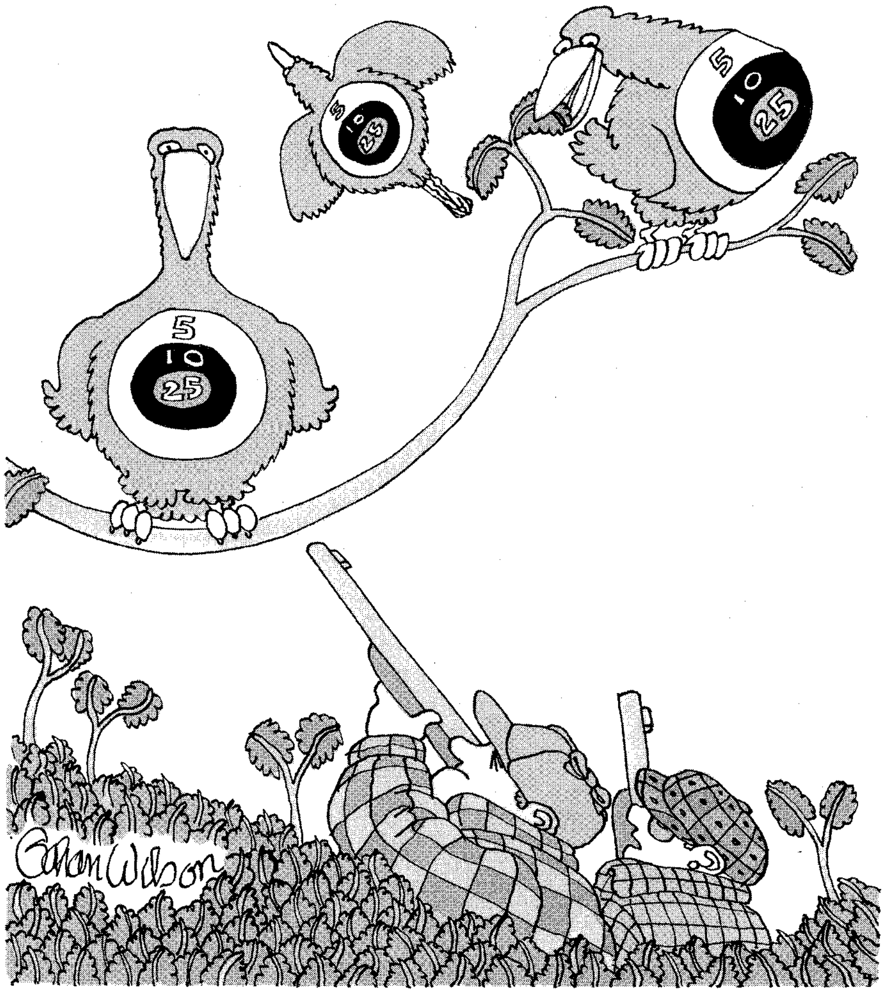
As we signed paperwork at the hospital, I kept seeing her as she was afterward, bundled in a sheet, her hands folded on her chest and her mouth parted slightly, a small scab on her lower lip. My father had broken down over her, his tears falling onto her closed eyes. When the doctors asked permission to do an autopsy, my sister suggested that we allow them to examine everything but her eyes, her last blue-and-white element: "She's an artist, she may need them." The autopsy later revealed that the cancer had returned, everywhere and all at once.

We drove back to Villanova in silence. Relatives kept arriving, and soon the house was full. Amanda and I ended up sleeping in my parents' room, because my father said that he couldn't stand to be there just yet. He took the futon in his study, and I thought of him lying alone beneath his porthole, looking west. Her porthole. The house was a minefield of memory—every painting, well-scrubbed pot on her pegboard, phone message in her hand. Upstairs was a trove of presents she had wrapped but not yet addressed, awaiting Christmas, five months away.

Amanda and I stayed awake for hours. After she dozed off, I found myself thinking about "The Tailor of Gloucester." At moments, I was almost able to soothe myself by thinking of Grandpa John as the tailor, absent from his shop only because he was sick and frail, and Mom as a faithful brown mouse, sewing busily in the dark.

At dawn, I was awoken by a soft rap on the door between the bedroom and The Link. Thinking it must be my father, I mumbled, "Yes, come in." When there was no reply, I decided I must have dreamed it. Then came another rap. Thoroughly awake now, I got out of bed and walked to the door and said "Hello?" A series of raps, two feet away and distinct, answered back. It wasn't *tip tap, tip tap, tip tap tip*, quite, but nearly.

I opened the door and peered into The Link. The passage was empty. It was empty, that is, if you don't count the pewter mirror where Mom liked to primp in passing, or the door to the garden with its nested dog door (six inches wide, with an inch of leeway), or the tidy bureau and rack for my father's suits and overcoats, or the cunning shelf for his hats she'd asked the carpenters to notch out above the lintel—he disliked hats, but you never know—or the closet that she had said would be perfect for him and later appropriated for herself. She kept her suitcases on top of it, ready to go. Readiness was all. ♦

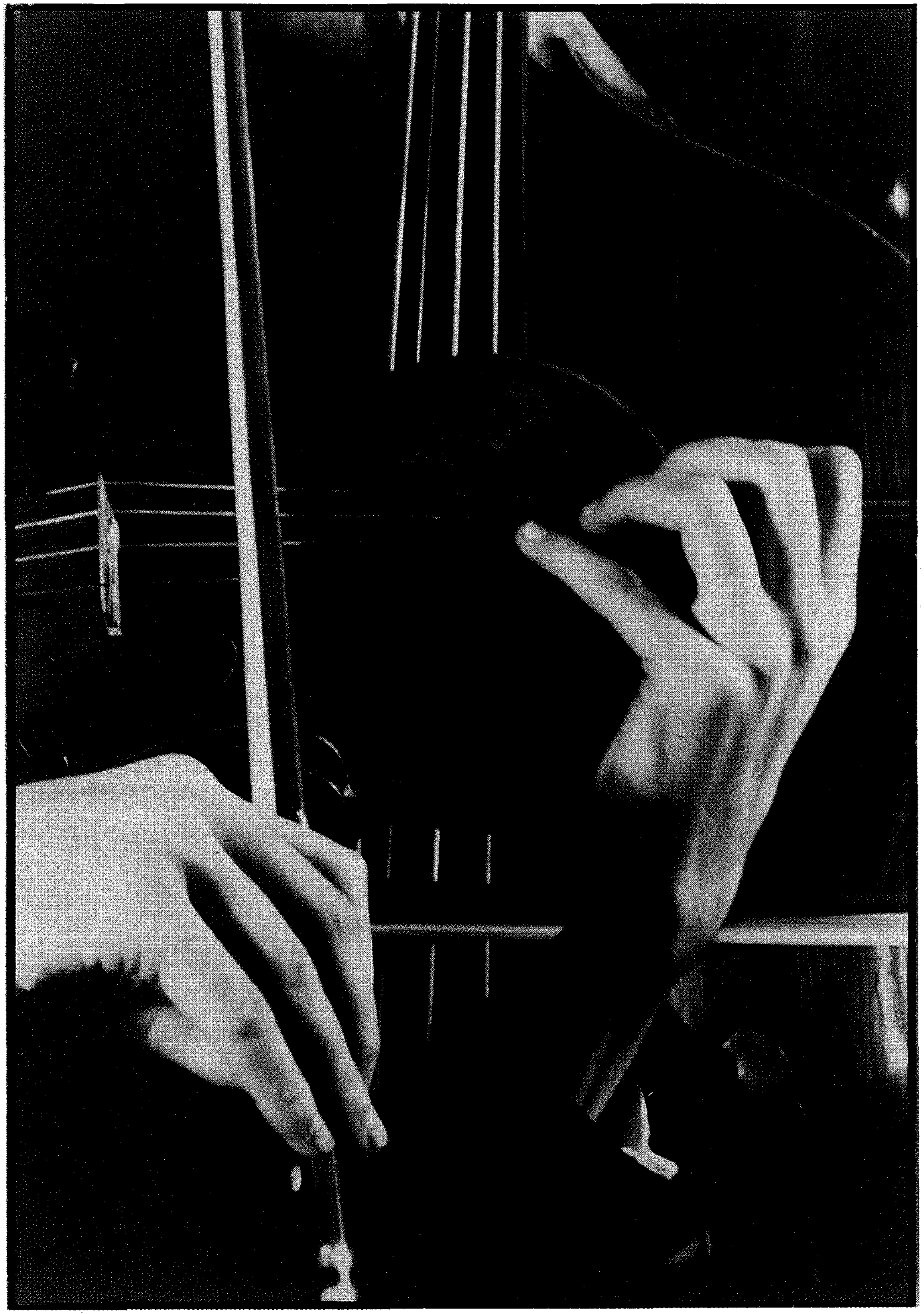


"It's a wonder they aren't totally extinct!"

FICTION

THE FIRST SENSE

BY NADINE GORDIMER



She has never felt any resentment that he became a musician and she didn't. Could hardly call her amateur flute-playing a vocation. Envy? Only pride in the achievement that he was born for. She sits at a computer in a city-government office, earning, under pleasant enough conditions, a salary that has at least provided regularly for their basic needs, while his remuneration for the privilege of being a cellist in a symphony orchestra has been sometimes augmented by chamber-music engagements, sometimes not; in the summer, the off season for the orchestra, he is dependent on these performances on the side.

Their social life is in his professional circle—fellow-musicians, music critics, aficionados whose connections insure them free tickets, and the musical families in which most of the orchestra members grew up, the piano-teacher or choir-singing mothers and church-organist fathers. When new acquaintances remember to give her the obligatory polite attention, with the question "What do you do?," and she tells them, they clearly wonder what she and the cellist who is married to her have in common.

As for her, she found when she was still an adolescent—the time for discovering parental limitations—that her cheerful father, with his sports shop and the beguiling heartiness that is a qualification for that business, and her mother, with her groupies exchanging talk of female reproductive maladies, from conception to menopause, did not have in their comprehension what it was that she wanted to do. A school outing at sixteen had taken her to a concert where she heard, coming out of a slim tube held to human lips, the call of the flute. Much later, she was able to identify the auditory memory as Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 2 in D, K. 314. Meanwhile, attribution didn't matter any more than the unknown name of a bird that sang heart-piercingly, hidden in her parents' garden. The teacher who had arranged the cultural event was understanding enough to put the girl in touch with a musical youth group in the city. She babysat on weekends to pay for the hire of a flute, and began to attempt to learn how to produce with her own breath and fingers something of what she had heard.

He was among the Youth Players. His instrument was the very antithesis of the flute. Part of the language of early attraction was a kind of repartee about this, showoff, slangy, childish. The sounds he drew from the overgrown violin between his knees: the complaining moo of a sick cow; the rasp of a blunt saw; a long fart. "Excuse me!" he would say, with a clownish lift of the eyebrows and a down-twisted mouth. His cello, like her flute, was a secondhand donation to the Players from the estate of some old man or woman that was of no interest to family descendants. He tended it in a sensuous way, which, if she had not been so young and innocent, she could have read as an augur of how his lovemaking would begin. Within a year, his exceptional talent had been recognized by the professional musicians who coached these young people voluntarily, and the cello was declared his, no longer on loan.

They played together when alone, to amuse themselves and secretly imagine that they were already in concert performance, the low, powerful cadence coming from the golden-brown body of the cello making her flute voice sound, by contrast, more like that of a squeaking mouse than it would have heard solo. In time, she reached a certain level of minor accomplishment. He couldn't lie to her. They had, with the complicity of his friends, found a place where they could make love—for her, the first time—and, out of commitment to a sincerity beyond their years, he couldn't deceive her and let her suffer the disillusions of persisting with a career that was not open to her level of performance. Already she had been hurt, dismayed at being replaced by other young flautists when ensembles were chosen for public performances by "talented musicians of the future."

"You'll still have the pleasure of playing the instrument you love best."

She would always remember what she said: "The cello is the instrument I love best."

They grew up enough to leave whatever they had been told was home, the parents. They worked as waiters in a restaurant; he gave music lessons in schools. They found a bachelor pad in the run-down part of town, where most whites were afraid to live because blacks had moved there since segregation was outlawed. In the generosity of their passionate happiness they had the expansive impossible need to share something of it—the intangible become tangible—bringing a young man who played pennywhistle *kwela* on the street corner up to their kitchen nook to have a real meal with them, rather than tossing small change into his cap. The white caretaker of the building objected vociferously. "You mad? You mad or what? Inviting blacks to rob and murder you. I can't have it in the building."

She went to computer courses and became proficient. If you're not an artist of some kind, or a doctor, a civil-rights lawyer, what other skill makes you of use in a developing country? Chosen, loved by the one you love—what would be more meaningful than being necessary to him in a practical sense as well, able to support his vocation, his achievements yours by proxy? "What do you do?" "Can't you see? She makes fulfillment possible, for both of them."

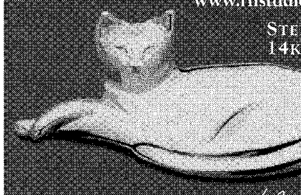
Children: married more than a year, they discussed this, the supposedly natural progression in love. Postponed until next time. Next time, they reached the fact: as his unusual gifts began to bring engagements at music festivals abroad and opportunities to play with important—soon-to-be-famous—orchestras, it became clear that he could not be a father, home for the bedtime story every night, or for schoolboy soccer games, at the same time that he was a cellist, soon to have his name on CD labels. If she could get leave from her increasingly responsible job—not too difficult, on occasion—to accompany him, she would not be able to shelve that other responsibility, care of a baby. They made the choice of what they wanted: each other, within a single career. Let her mother and her teatime friends focus on the hazards of reproduction, contemplating their own navels. Let other men seek immortality in progeny; music has no limiting lifespan. An expert told them that the hand-me-down cello was at least seventy years old and the better for it.

One month—when was it?—she found that she was pregnant; kept getting ready to tell him but didn't. He was going on a concert tour in another part of the country, and by the time he came back there was nothing to tell. The process was legal, fortunately, under the new laws of the country, conveniently available at a

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE, "UNTITLED" (CA. 1940) / BUHL COLLECTION / ESTATE MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

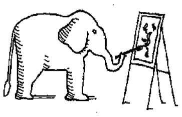
From James & Kay Salter
LIFE IS MEALS
"An irresistible food lover's book of days, a rich feast of literary plums, formulas for dinner party chemistry, and musings on chocolate as an aphrodisiac" –GAEL GREENE
www.aaknopf.com
art ©Fabrice Moireau

Catering To Canine Wanderlust Since 1997
The Internet's #1 Pet Travel Resource with over 25,000 hotels, campgrounds, beaches & fun places that welcome pets (+ pet sitters, kennels and more)
petswelcome.com

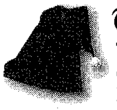


Contented Cat Pin
www.rnstudios.com
STERLING $65
14K GOLD $390
Velvet Box
1-800 235-0471
S/H $5.75
ROGER NICHOLS Studios
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW
Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, religious, etc. New authors welcomed. For free 32-page illustrated guidebook **TD-70, call 1-800-821-3990 or write to: Vantage Press, 419 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016**



The artists are big. The cause is even bigger.
Buy an amazing original from the Asian Elephant Art & Conservation Project founded by Komar & Melamid.
www.elephantart.com



Traditional Nightcap
The red cotton flannel classic in luxurious double layers to keep you really warm. Hand crafted. Adjustable sizing fits adults and kids. $ 19.95. Conquer the energy crisis at
www.StayWarmStore.com
Phone 1 877 589 1472 (toll free)

clinic named for Marie Stopes, a past campaigner for women's rights over their reproductive systems. Better not to have him—what? Even regretful. You know how men, no matter how rewarded with success, buoyant with the tide of applause, still feel they must prove themselves potent. (Where had she picked that up? Eavesdropping, as an adolescent, on tea parties.)

She was so much part of the confraternity of orchestras. The rivalry among the players, drowned out by the exaltation of the music they created together. The gossip—because she was not one of them, both the men and the women trusted her with indiscretions that they wouldn't risk with one another. And when he had differences with guest conductors from Bulgaria or Japan or God knows where, their egos as complex as the pronunciation of their names, his exasperation found relief, as he unburdened himself in bed of the podium dramas and moved on to the haven of lovemaking. If she was in a low mood—the bungles of an inefficient colleague at work, or her father's "heart condition" and her mother's long complaints over the telephone about his disobeying doctor's orders with his whiskey-swilling golfers—the cello would join them in the bedroom and he'd play for her. Sometimes until she fell asleep to the low tender tones of what had become his voice, to her, the voice of that big curved instrument, its softly buffed surface and graceful bulk held close against his body, sharing the intimacy that was hers. At concerts, when his solo part came, she did not realize that she was smiling in recognition, that this was a voice she would have recognized anywhere, among other cellists bowing other instruments.

Each year, the music critics granted, he played better. Exceeded himself. When distinguished musicians came for the symphony and opera season, it was appropriate that he and she should entertain them at the house, far from the pad they'd once dossed down in. Where others might have kept a special piece of furniture, some inheritance, there stood in the living room, retired, the cello he'd learned to play on loan. He now owned a Guadagnini, a mid-eighteenth-century cello, found for him by a dealer in Prague. He had been hesitant. How could he spend such a fortune? But she was taken aback, indignant, as if someone had already dared to remark on his presumptuous extravagance. "An artist doesn't care for material possessions as such. You're not buying a Mercedes, a yacht!" He had bought a voice of incomparable beauty, somehow human, though of a subtlety and depth—moving from the sonority of an organ to the faintest stir of silences—that no human voice could produce. He admitted—as if telling himself in confidence, as much as her—that this instrument roused in him skilled responses that he hadn't known he had.

In the company of guests whose life was music, as was his, he was as generous as a pop singer responding to fans. He'd bring out the precious presence in its black reliquary, free it, and settle himself to play among the buffet plates and replenished wineglasses. If he'd had a few too many, he'd joke, taking her by the waist for a moment, "I'm just the wunderkind brought in to thump out 'Für Elise' on the piano," and then he'd play so purely that the voice of the aristocratic cello, which she knew as well as she had that of the charity one, made all social exchange strangely trivial. But the musicians, entrepreneurs, and guests favored to be among them applauded, descended upon him, the husbands and gay men hunching his shoulders in their grasp, the women giving accolades, sometimes landing on his lips. It wasn't unusual for one of the distinguished male guests—not the Japanese but especially the elderly German or Italian conductors—to make a pass at her. She knew that she was attractive enough, intelligent enough, musically and otherwise (even her buffet was good), for this to happen, but she was aware that it was really the bloom of being the outstandingly gifted cellist's woman that motivated these advances. Imagine if the next time the celebrated cellist played under your baton in Strasbourg you were able to remark to another musician your own age, "And his wife's pretty good, too, in bed."

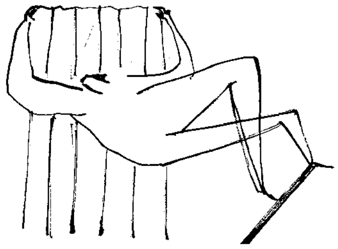
Once the guests had gone, host and hostess laughed about the flirtatious attention, which he hadn't failed to notice. The cello stood grandly against the wall in the bedroom. Burglaries were common in the suburbs, and there were knowledgeable gangs who looked not for TV sets and computers but for paintings and other valuable objects. Anyone who broke in would have to come into the bedroom to catch sight of the noble Guadagnini, and face the revolver kept under the pillow.

Bach, Mozart, Hindemith, Cage, Stockhausen, and Glass were no longer regarded in the performance world patronizingly as music that blacks neither enjoyed nor understood. The national orchestra, which was his base—while his prestige meant that he could absent himself whenever he was invited to festivals or to join a string ensemble on tour—had a black trombonist and a young second violinist with African braids that fell about her ebony neck as she wielded her bow. She spoke German to a visiting Austrian conductor; she'd had a scholarship to study in Strasbourg. Professional musicians have always been a league of nations; for a time, the orchestra had a tympanist from Brazil. He became a special friend, and on occasion a live-in guest, who kept her company when the beautiful cello accompanied its player overseas.

She was aware that, without a particular ability of her own, beyond an everyday competence in commercial communications, she was privileged enough to have an interesting life, and a remarkably talented man whose milieu was also hers.

What was the phrase? She "saw the world," often travelling with him. She had arranged a leave, to accompany the string ensemble to Berlin, for one of the many musical events in commemoration of the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Mozart's birth, but then couldn't go after all, because her father was dying—cheerfully, but her mother had to be supported.

The ensemble met with exceptional success, among musicians of high reputation from many countries. He brought back a folder full of press cuttings—a few in English—glowing. He tipped his head dismissively—perhaps you can become inured to praise, in time, or perhaps he was tired, drained by the demands of his music. She had suggestions for relaxation: a film, a dinner, away from concert-hall discipline, with the ensemble musicians; one becomes close to people—a special relationship that she had long recognized in him—with whom one has achieved something. He was not enthusiastic. "Next week, next week." He took the revered cello out of its solitude in the case carved to its shape and played, to himself, to her—well, she was in the room those evenings.



It is his voice, that glorious voice of his cello, saying something different, speaking not to her but to some other.

He makes love to her. Isn't that always the signal of return after he has been away?

There's a deliberation in the caresses. She is almost moved to say stupidly what they've never thought to say to each other: Do you still love me?

He begins to absent himself from her at unexplained times or for obligations that he must know she knows don't exist.

The voice of the cello doesn't lie.

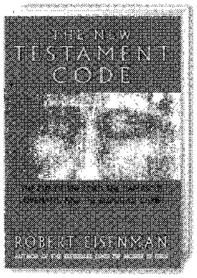
How to apply to the life of this man that shabby ordinary circumstance—what's the phrase? He's *having an affair*. Artists of any kind attract women. They sniff out some mysterious energy of devotion there, which will always be the rival of their own usually reliable powers of seduction. Something that will be kept from even the most desired woman. Who could know that attraction better than she? But, for her, that other, mysterious energy of devotion has now made of love a threesome.

The cello with its curved body reverentially in the bedroom.

What woman?

At music festivals around the world, the same orchestral players, the same quartets and trios keep meeting. In different countries, they share a map of common experience, live in the same hotels, exchange discoveries of restaurants, complaints about concert-hall acoustics, and enthusiasm over audience response. If it were some musician encountered on a particular tour, that didn't necessarily mean that the affair was a brief one, which had ended when the man and the woman went their separate ways, seas and continents apart; they might meet again,

THE McLEAN CENTER
AT FERNSIDE
A World-Class Alcohol and Drug Residential Treatment Program in a peaceful, rural setting with exceptional accommodations.
Princeton, MA
www.mclean.harvard.edu • 1.800.906.9531
McLean Hospital is a psychiatric teaching facility of Harvard Medical School, an affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital and a member of Partners HealthCare.

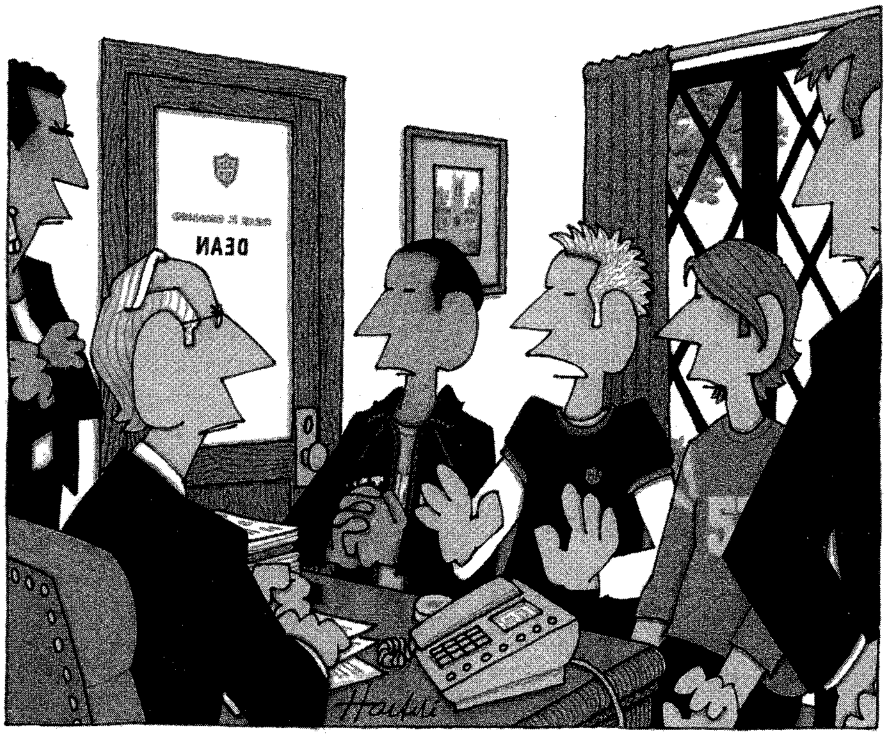

NEW FROM ROBERT EISENMAN
THE NEW TESTAMENT CODE
ROBERT EISENMAN
"Cracks the Codes of Theological Disinformation." -Robert Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*
"Extraordinary... a Masterpiece." -James Tabor, *The Jesus Dynasty*
"Provocative." -*Booklist*
Available in hardcover wherever books are sold.
Sterling

Golden Retriever
www.rnstudios.com
Sterling Silver $ 55.00
14k Gold $ 295.00
Velvet Box
800-235-0471
Actual Size
ROGER NICHOLS studios S/H $5.75
554 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701

JOHN CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
ORDER BY DEC. 20TH FOR HOLIDAY DELIVERY!
Anniversary Date
IN ROMAN NUMERALS!
December 11, 1998 = XII XI MCMXCVIII
See Your Date Online! FROM $590
PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

Retirement Resort Living in Chapel Hill, NC
Life has been good to you. Now it gets even better.
THE CEDARS
OF CHAPEL HILL
1-877-433-3669 • cedarsofchapelhill.com

www.haydenharnett.com/gifts



"There was no hazing involved. We simply beat him up."

• •

plan to, at the next festival, somewhere else in the world—Vienna, Jerusalem, Sydney—where he had played or was contracted to play soon. The stimulation not only of performance before an unknown audience but of meeting again, the excitement of being presented with the opportunity to continue something interrupted.

Or was the woman nearer home? A member of the national orchestra in which he and his cello were star performers? That was an identification she found hard to look for, considering their company of friends in this way. A young woman, of course, a younger woman than herself. But wasn't that just the inevitable decided at her mother's tea-table forum? The clarinet player was in her late forties, endowed with fine breasts in décolleté and a delightful wit. There was often repartee between them, the clarinet and the cello, over drinks. The pianist, young with waist-length red-out-of-the-bottle hair, was a lesbian kept under strict guard by her woman. The third and last female musician in the orchestra was also the last whom one would be crass enough to think of: her name was Khomotso; she was the second violinist of extraordinary talent, one of the two black musicians. She was so young; she had given birth to an adored baby, who, for the first few months of life, had been brought to rehearsals in the car of Khomotso's sister so that the mother could suckle the infant there. The director of the orchestra gave an interview to a Sunday newspaper about this, as an example of the orchestra's adaptation to the human values of the new South Africa. The violinist was certainly the prettiest, the most desirable, of the women in whose company the cellist spent the intense part of his days and nights, but respect, *his* human feeling, would be stronger than sexual attraction, his identification with her as a musician would make distracting her from that taboo. As for him, wouldn't it look like the old South Africa—a white man "taking advantage of" the precariously balanced life of a young black woman?

His lover might also have been one of the faithful season-ticket holders who gave post-performance parties. He had a lunchtime friendship with one of the male regulars, an industrialist and amateur viola player with a fine music library, from which he was free to borrow. Or it might have been the wife of one of these men. Many of the wives were themselves career women, much younger than their wealthy husbands, bringing intelligence of a commitment to ideas and activities outside the arts, as well as what he might see as sexual availability.

It was no longer assumed that she would go with him, as she always had, when he accepted invitations to receptions or private houses; the unspoken implication was that these were now strictly professional. He no longer suggested what had also been assumed—that when he was to give a recital in another city in their home country she would, of course, be there. He packed his overnight bag on their bed, took up the black-clad body of the cello, and kissed her goodbye. There were well-spaced acts of dutiful intercourse, as if it were as routine as a regular haircut. She began to want to avoid the approach in bed, and then grew fearful that she would send him to the other woman by suggesting that she did not desire him; at the same time, she wanted terribly to put her hands, her mouth on the body beside her, no matter the humiliation of the act, which he fulfilled like a medical procedure, prescribed to satisfy her. A bill to be paid.

She waited for him to speak. About what had happened. To trust the long confidence between them. He never did. She did not ask, because she was also afraid that what had happened, once admitted, would be irrevocably real.

One night, he got up in the dark, took the cello out of its bed, and played. She woke to the voice, saying something passionately angry in its deepest bass.

Then there came the time when—was it possible, in his magnificent, exquisite playing?—there was a disharmony, the low notes dragging as if the cello were refusing him. Nights, weeks, the same.

So. She knew that the affair was over. She felt a pull of sadness—for him. For herself, nothing. By never confronting him she had stunned herself.

Soon he came to her again. The three of them—he, she, and the cello against the wall—were together.

He made love better than ever remembered, caresses not known, more subtle, more anticipatory of what could be roused in her, what she was capable of feeling, needing. As if he'd had the experience of a different instrument to learn from. ♦

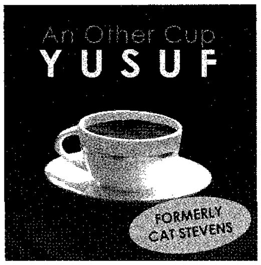
WINTER SHOWCASE

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT NEW PRODUCTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

Providing quality craftsmanship since 1962: Northwest Coast Indian and Celtic jewelry, Akubra hats, Filson clothing and luggage, Bosca leather goods, Devold woollens, and more.

800-324-4934
www.davidmorgan.com

David Morgan



As Cat Stevens, he defined a generation. Finally, after finding a new life, 30 years later he returns with his finest album—"An Other Cup."

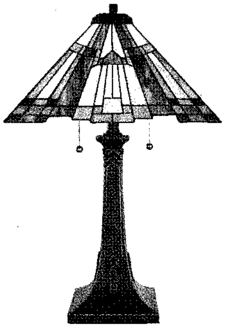
Album in stores everywhere now!

ATLANTIC®
YA records

RosettaStone
SPANISH

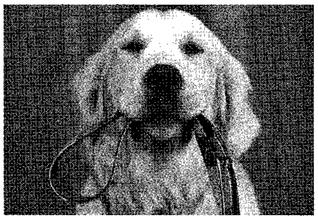
Rosetta Stone® Language Learning Software. Try a free demo and purchase risk-free with our six-month money-back guarantee. Available in 30 languages.

800.399.6162
www.RosettaStone.com/ges41



Mission lights—table and floor lamps, lighting fixtures both inside and out. Selection, service, and price. (Shown: Quoizel's new Inglenook Mission Lamp.)

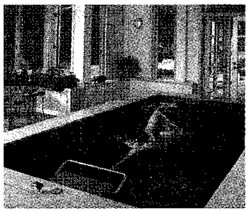
800.736.0126
www.thebrightspot.com



Fun fashion accessories for people and pets. Featuring a unique collection of hand-woven belts and dog collars. Brilliant colors, quality craftsmanship, fun-spirited.

866.726.WAGS (9247)
www.tailwags.com

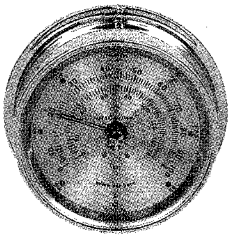
a tail we could wag® *retrieve life!*



Swim or exercise in place against a smooth current adjustable to any speed or ability. Installed indoors or out, the Endless Pool is perfect for swimming, exercise, therapy, relaxation, or fun. Call or visit us online to request a free DVD.

800.233.0741, ext. 5325, or
www.endlesspools.com/5325

ENDLESS POOLS®
SWIMMING MACHINES



Beautifully crafted and technically precise, Maximum instruments bring the complete weather story into your home. Wireless instruments are available. For a FREE catalogue, call Maximum at **508.995.2200**, or visit **www.maximum-inc.com**.

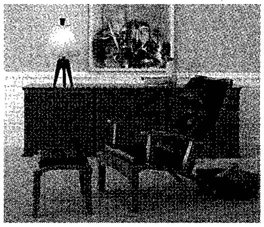
MAXIMUM®
WEATHER INSTRUMENTS

Stone Soup
The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

"The New Yorker of the 8-to-13 set."
—*Ms.*

This beautiful children's magazine makes a great gift for budding writers and artists! $34, six issues.

800.447.4569
www.stonesoup.com



Solid wood furniture handcrafted in Maine and guaranteed for life. Shaker, German Bauhaus, and Asian-inspired designs, 19th-century joinery techniques, and American black cherry lend each piece a clean, timeless style.

800.708.9045
www.thosmoser.com

THOS. MOSER

THE CRITICS

BOOKS

THE MASTER OF MALGUDI

The fiction of R. K. Narayan.

BY WYATT MASON

When R. K. Narayan died, in the spring of 2001 at the age of ninety-four, his legacy seemed assured. Over seven decades of literary activity, he had produced fourteen novels, countless essays, and dozens of stories, the majority of his fiction set in a South Indian town that he called Malgudi. No more a feature of atlases than Trollope's Barchester, Narayan's Malgudi put modern Indian writing on the map. For although a handful of Indian novels had been written in English during the nineteenth century, and both Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand had found readers for their novels in English by the nineteen-thirties, it was Narayan—two generations before Salman Rushdie—who began to produce the first world-renowned body of work not rendered in any of India's many vernacular languages. As such, there seemed little risk of hyperbole when Narayan's obituary in the *Guardian* said that he was held to be "India's greatest writer in English of the twentieth century."

And yet if Narayan's standing was consistently described in the most vigorous terms, assessments of his writing were less robust. His work was called "charming," "simple," "gentle," "harmless," "lightly funny," and "benign"—applause so placid that it was unlikely to wake anyone dozing in the audience. V. S. Naipaul, in a tribute to Narayan in *Time*, recalled having been "immediately enchanted" by Narayan's early work, but he seemed perplexed that Narayan, a writer of realist fiction, "was not interested in Indian politics or Indian problems"—that he did not see the India that Naipaul had dubbed "a wounded civilization." Though Naipaul claimed, charitably, "I do not hold this against him," there was a lingering suggestion that it could be held against Narayan's art. "A more clear-sighted man would not have been able to filter out or make harmless the distress of India, as Narayan does in Malgudi." He went on:

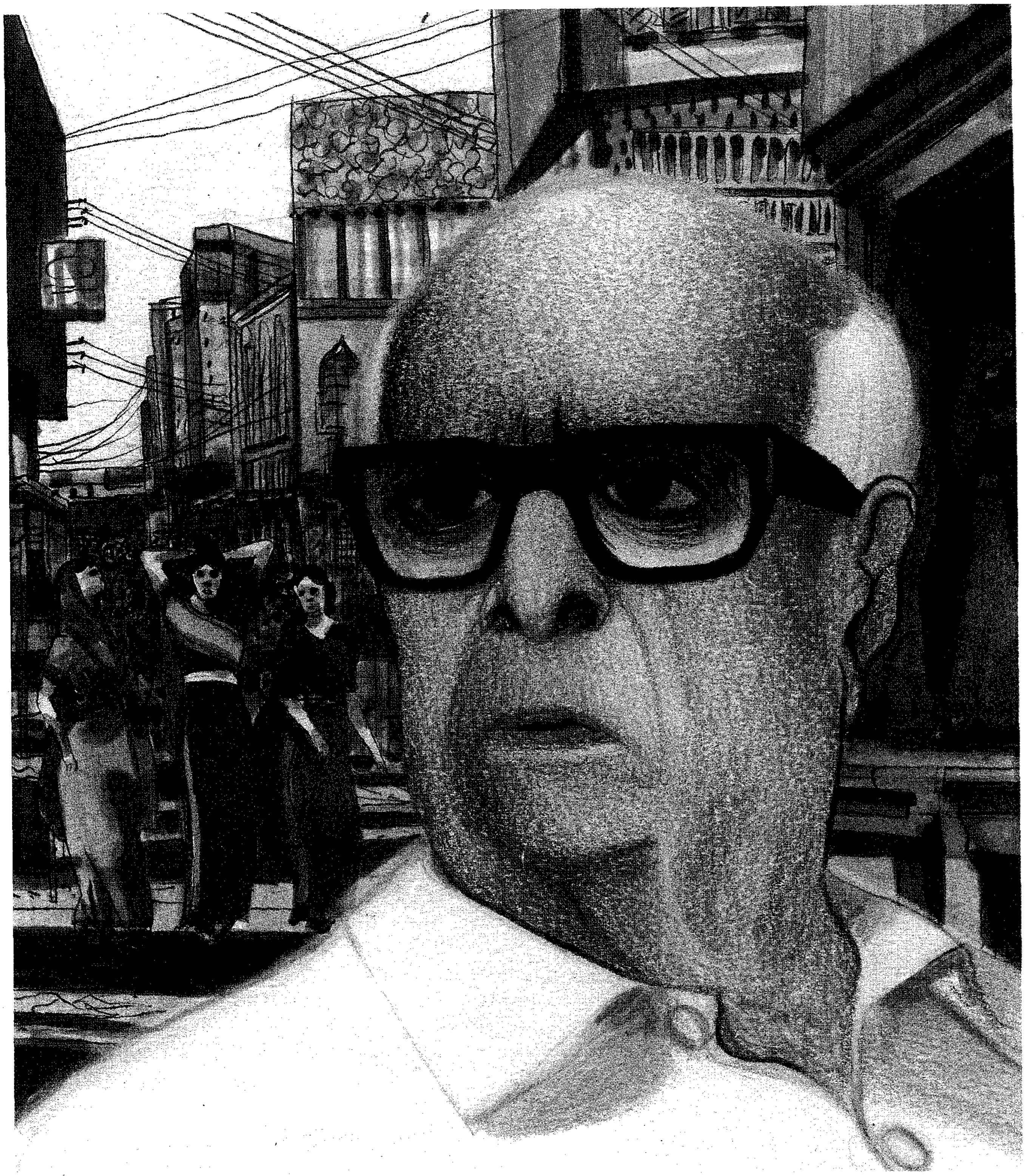
> I have grown to feel that he is in some ways like Gandhi. Gandhi's first book . . . is full of religious idiocies. No one would have prophesied a future for him. But he had in a heightened way Narayan's mystical idea of an eternal India; and look what happened to him. Narayan, with his glories and limitations, is the Gandhi of modern Indian literature.

Sainthood is a kind of legacy, but fiction writers tend to prefer devoted readers to ardent worshippers. To mark the occasion of Narayan's centenary year, a range of reissues has recently appeared, introduced by a new generation of authors who see him not as a dated writer of historical consequence but as a timeless writer of aesthetic excellence. They focus less on his uncontested greatness than on his disputed goodness. Monica Ali, introducing Narayan's late novel "The Painter of Signs" (Penguin; $13), warns us not to mistake a smaller world—Narayan's novels rarely run to more than two hundred pages—for a lesser one. Pankaj Mishra prefaces "The Ramayana" (Penguin; $13), a prose retelling of the epic poem, with the observation that Narayan, far from lacking political clear-sightedness, responded with a "pragmatic realism, a gentle refusal to regard good and evil as unmixed." Jhumpa Lahiri, in her foreword to "Malgudi Days" (Penguin; $14), a selection of short stories, is anxious for us not to overlook, in Narayan's unself-regarding and economical style, its fineness: "While other writers rely on paragraphs and pages to get their points across, Narayan extracts the full capacity of each sentence, so much so that his stories seem bound by an invisible yet essential mechanism, similar to the metrical and quantitative constraints of poetry."

Nonetheless, it should be conceded that a modern reader may initially find barriers to a thorough appreciation of Narayan's work. Consider a few lines from his first novel, "Swami and Friends" (1935), where a fight has erupted in a classroom full of young children: "The teacher came in and stood aghast. He could do little more than look on and ejaculate." A few pages later, one boy begins to lecture a group of quarrelling playmates: "He said impressive things about friendship, quoting from his book the story of the dying old man and the faggots, which proved that union was strength." Though we're unlikely to mistake a bundle of sticks or a headmaster's shouts for anything coarser, such old-fashioned formulations can be distracting. But this apparent quaintness is instructive, given that Narayan wrote not in the language of his birth, Tamil, but in an English adopted and adapted from that of India's colonial overlords. Frequently, there are phrases that would seem pure cliché in a British or American writer, but which here take on the air of borrowings, as if they were between quotation marks. (A useful analogy might be found in the films of Satyajit Ray, whose characters pepper their Bengali speech with idioms like "Just wait and see.") It is better to read Narayan as he wrote, essentially as a writer in translation, or, at the very least, as one using a language in transition.

Early in "Swami and Friends," say, we join a trio of witnesses to a schoolyard dustup featuring two of the biggest boys in the class:

> The three youngsters could hardly believe their eyes. Somu and Mani fighting! They lost their heads. They thought that Somu and Mani were killing each other. They looked



Narayan's achievement was to bring to English writing a conception of character unlike that of the traditional Western novel.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

accusingly at one another, and then ran towards the school.

They burst in upon the headmaster, who gathered from them with difficulty that in the adjacent field two murders were being committed at that very moment. He was disposed to laugh at first. But the excitement and seriousness on the boys' faces made him check his laughter and scratch his chin. He called a peon and with him set off to the field.

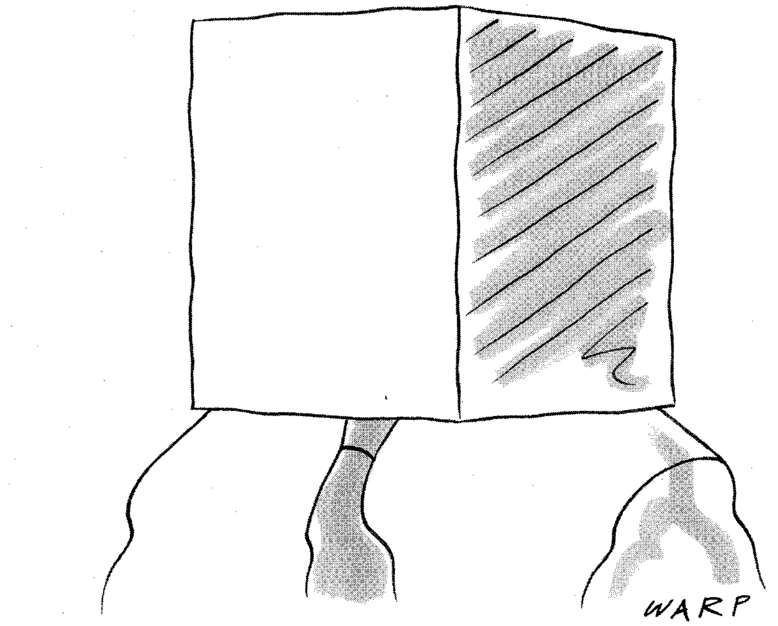
The fighters, rolling and rolling, were everywhere in the field. The headmaster and the peon easily picked them apart, much to the astonishment of Swaminathan, who had thought till then that the strength that Somu or Mani possessed was not possessed by anyone else in the world.

Again, there are stock phrases ("hardly believe their eyes," "lost their heads"), but Narayan effects a series of startlingly rapid shifts in perspective, a characteristic feature of his writing. The fight is first seen through the eyes of "three youngsters," whose astonishment ("Somu and Mani fighting!") impels them to tell the headmaster, who takes over the narrative point of view. The headmaster gathers "with difficulty" (because the three youngsters, we can be sure, are shouting in breathless unison) that grievous bodily harm is taking place (“two murders,” he muses—this overstatement being Narayan’s understated way of expressing adult condescension). The headmaster, though, pantomimes sombreness for his charges’ benefit (“the boys’ faces made him check his laughter and scratch his chin”—that international gesture of seriousness) before heading to the field. And there the two divergent perspectives are married in the mind of ten-year-old Swaminathan, whose consciousness is the novel’s axis. As he sees the boys “easily picked apart,” the child finds his idea of the universe (“that the strength that Somu or Mani possessed was not possessed by anyone else in the world”) overturned.

From such innocent events as schoolyard tussles, Narayan manages to extract telling moments when characters confront the limits of their perspectives, when the world of the self is shown to be at odds with one’s self in the world. Though the subject matter of these conflicts is not overtly political, to suggest, in Naipaul’s phrase, that Narayan was “able to filter out or make harmless the distress of India” is itself to subject his writing to a distressing kind of filter. Narayan’s sly political sensibility is always just beneath the surface, as in this description of Swaminathan studying for school:

> He sat at his table and took out his atlas. He opened the political map of Europe and sat gazing at it. It puzzled him how people managed to live in such a crooked country as Europe. He wondered what the shape of the people might be who lived in places where the outline narrowed as in a cape, and how they managed to escape being strangled by the contour of their land. And then another favourite problem began to tease him: how did those map-makers find out what the shape of a country was? How did they find out that Europe was like a camel’s head? Probably they stood on high towers and copied what they saw below. He wondered if he would be able to see India as it looked in the map, if he stood on the top of the town hall. He had never been there nor ever did he wish to go there. Though he was incredulous, tailor Ranga persistently informed him that there was a torture chamber in the top storey of the town hall to which Pathans decoyed young people.

On one level, the scene shows the charming literalness of a child’s mind, as it ponders what “the shape of the people might be who lived in places where the outline narrowed as in a cape.” But Narayan’s language tells another story as well, one that charts an area of darkness. Staring at the “political map,” Swaminathan, for whom Europe is both a distant abstraction and an imperial reality, homogenizes it into “a crooked country.” An inhabitant of a world where a border has become a kind of barrier, the boy wonders how people “escape being strangled by the contour of their land.” Tempted to see India as it looks to mapmakers, from that unfiltered perspective, he is nonetheless afraid that it might lead to his “torture.” Crookedness, strangulation, torture: these words draw their own map, one that describes how it might feel to live in a country ruled by another. Edmund Wilson’s assessment of Walt Whitman applies equally to Narayan: “He does not write editorials on current events but describes his actual feelings.”



Cubicles—The Next Generation

One of eight children, Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanswami was born on October 10, 1906, in Madras. Narayan’s family was Brahmin, the highest of the Hindu castes, whose members traditionally are priests or scholars. Shortly after Narayan’s birth, his father, a headmaster, took a position in a government school in Mysore, several hours from Madras. Because his mother was pregnant and unwell, little Narayan was left in Madras, in the care of his grandmother, an arrangement that lasted more than a decade.

Narayan’s earliest years in Madras seem largely to have been an idyll, if a quite solitary one. In his memoir, “My Days” (1974), Narayan recalls, “All day long, I sat half buried in sand piled in a corner of our garden, raising castles and mountain-ranges, unaware of the fierce Madras sun overhead. I had a peacock and a monkey for company.” Formal education, however, proved a torment. Narayan recalls a stroll with his uncle that took him past the school where he would soon enroll, “a gaunt-looking building with a crucifix on its roof, and I hated it at first sight.” Attendance did not amend the impression:

> Ours was a Lutheran Mission School—mostly for boarders who were Christian converts. The teachers were all converts, and, towards the few non-Christian students like me, they displayed a lot of hatred. Most of the Christian students also detested us. The scripture classes were mostly devoted to attacking and lampooning the Hindu gods, and violent abuses were heaped on idol-worshippers as a prelude to glorifying Jesus. Among the non-Christians in our class I was the only Brahmin boy, and received special attention; the whole class would turn in my direction when the teacher said that Brahmins claiming to be vegetarians ate fish and meat in secret, in a sneaky way, and were responsible for the soaring price of those commodities.

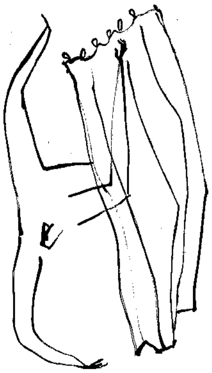
The boy’s academic apathy only

deepened when he finally went to Mysore to live with his parents. Though he attended Maharaja's Collegiate High School, where his father was headmaster, Narayan recalled working "without conviction, enthusiasm, or any sort of distinction." His claim is not an instance of memoiristic self-mockery. Narayan failed his university entrance exam, unable to pass the English portion. Retaking the test a year later, he buckled down and passed the English portion, managing, instead, to flunk Tamil, his native tongue, and fail the exam a second time.

And it is here, with Narayan finishing high school, that the diverting particulars of childhood—the monkeys and peacocks, the colonial cruelties, the academic misadventures—run dry. What comes next is interesting mostly for how interchangeable it is with the same period—hand to mouth—in the evolution of most any writer. Familiar as they have become, the scenes are best enjoyed in montage: the intense period of serious reading; the ensuing time of perfervid first composition, here taking the form of execrable, largely imitative, experimentation; an overlapping period of outsized pride over such compositions; an inevitable period of postal humblings, as submissions are dutifully returned with dismaying little slips; an era of humiliating jobs, to support an ambition that garners no other support. If the writer is Arthur Rimbaud, though, vindication arrives when Paul Verlaine reads the unknown young Frenchman's poems and invites him to Paris. If the writer is James Joyce, support arrives in the form of a handshake from William Butler Yeats, who goes to meet the unknown young Irishman's train in London. If the story is that of so many great writers' early lives, somewhere along the way an elder countryman of standing appears in a cameo role that makes a difference.

But, in Narayan's story, there is, for the first eleven years, no such support: no invitation, no train, no hand. He was pursuing a vocation that did not exist in his country, that of a realistic fiction writer in English. Whom could he ask?

And so, in the early nineteen-thirties, when Narayan's short stories were finding no favor in the world—when "Swaminathan, The Tate," his first completed novel, had travelled back and forth a dozen times between India and England; when the last available publisher's name and address was about to be exhausted—Narayan included a preëmptive note in a final submission letter, to the publisher Dent. He asked if, when they rejected the book, as he was sure they would, they could, instead of returning it, forward it to a friend of his studying at Exeter College, Oxford. To that friend, Kittu Purna, a contemporary from Mysore who had listened approvingly to the recitation of the perfervid early work, Narayan sent a note of advance warning that an ugly orphan would soon be arriving on his doorstep. Narayan, in his memoir, recalled asking Purna if he would be so kind as to "weight the manuscript with a stone and drown it in the Thames."



Dent did as Narayan asked; Purna did not. Instead, of his own accord he went to London to knock on the door of a writer he had met in Oxford: Graham Greene. Greene agreed to read the manuscript. When he had done so, he sent a note to India:

> Dear Mr. Narayan Swami,
>
> My friend Kit Purna sent me your novel the other day to read, and I should like to tell you as a fellow novelist how much I admired it. I took the liberty of sending it with a covering letter to a publisher, Hamish Hamilton, and I have heard from him to-day that he wishes to publish it. You couldn't I think have a better publisher. His is a young firm with a very good literary reputation and his connexion with the American publishers, Harper's, may make it possible to find a publisher for it too in the U.S.A. . . .
>
> It is a real joy to be of use to a new writer of your quality.

Narayan's quality—which prompted Greene to describe the novel, retitled "Swami and Friends," as "a book in ten thousand" and to help its author through the decades it took to see him fully established—requires subtler and deeper adjustments on the part of contemporary readers than merely to prose (plain but concentrated) or size (slim but teeming). Just as we do not read Jane Austen the way we read Virginia Woolf (for each has such radically different storytelling methods that to expect from either the pleasures of the other is to be disappointed with both), we do Narayan injury by demanding that he read like anyone but Narayan. His methods are different, and his conception of the novelistic form is very much his own.

Narayan's third novel, "The Dark Room" (1938)—now reissued in one of two omnibus collections from Everyman's Library ($25 each)—provides an early example of his singularity. The story concerns a young woman named Savitri. Married to an insurance officer, Ramani, with whom she has three children, Savitri is what we would now call a homemaker, whereas in the Indian culture and caste of her era she is simply what one would have called a woman: she serves her husband, cares for her children, and that is meant to be enough:

> At eight-thirty Savitri's ears, as ever, were the first to pick up the hoarse hooting of the Chevrolet horn. She shouted to the servant, "Ranga, open the motor shed!" Ramani as a rule sounded his horn at about a furlong from his gate, two long hoots which were meant to tell the household, "Ranga, keep the shed door open when I reach there, if you value your life," while to Savitri it said, "It is your business to see that Ranga does his work properly. So take warning." Some days the hooting would be less emphatic, and Savitri's ears were sufficiently attuned to the nuances and she could tell a few minutes in advance what temper her husband was in. Today the hooting was of the milder kind. It might mean that he was bringing home a guest for dinner or that he was in a happy mood, possibly through a victorious evening at the card table in his club. In either case they could await his arrival without apprehension.

Savitri, in this tense life of divining spousal moods from the "hoarse hooting" of a horn, is unhappy, not merely because her husband expects her to follow him "like the shadow following the substance," or because he is having an affair and is never home. Rather, fundamentally, Savitri is unfulfilled by her place in the world. Her friendships with other women are profitless; her relationship to her children is thankless; her sense of self so dim that she can do little more, most days, when her husband isn't home, than lie down, alone, on the floor, in the titular dark room.

In outline, "The Dark Room" has similarities to Richard Yates's first novel, "Revolutionary Road" (1961). Both tell the sadly familiar story of a philandering businessman husband and a miserable homemaker wife. Yates documents the psychological steps—difficult childhood, disappointing adolescence, missteps in adulthood and marriage—that lead the wife, April Wheeler, to end her life. Narayan, by contrast, tells us little of Savitri's childhood, nor, for that matter, of conditions beyond those of the objective, present moment surrounding the central event of the novel—the night when Savitri abandons her husband and seeks, down by the river, a better place for herself in the universe:

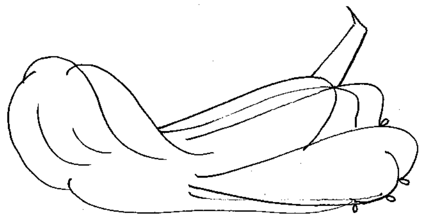
> She rose and stepped down. There was still one step, the very last submerged under water, very slippery with moss; and then one felt the sand under one's feet; water reached up to one's hips, and as one went further down, to one's breasts; and now the running water tripped up one's legs from behind. She stood in the water and prayed to her God on the Hill to protect the children. . . . The last sensation that she felt was a sharp sting as the water shot up her nostrils, and something took hold of her feet and toppled her over.

Unlike April Wheeler's act in "Revolutionary Road," Savitri's is averted. A man sees her being swept away and leaps in to save her. By novel's end, Savitri has returned home to her husband, to serve him as before. There, she is no less miserable, no more fulfilled. Nothing changes. For the Western reader accustomed to the psychological novel of action and outcome, such a story can seem oddly unsatisfying. Western novels about women whose lives are denied free exercise of will—Anna Karenina; Emma Bovary; Lily Bart in "The House of Mirth"; Florence Dowell in "The Good Soldier"; Edna Pontellier in "The Awakening"—have often charted a progression of cause and effect that makes comprehensible, even inevitable, a woman's final, metaphorical flight to the river. But in Narayan's world, while there is the same impulse to slough off one's bonds, it is always without outlet. Indeed, in Narayan's early novels his protagonists—Swaminathan in "Swami and Friends," Chandran in "The Bachelor of Arts"—are all trapped by, and strain against, existential bonds that prove unbreakable. All try to flee their frustratingly narrow lives by running away from home, but, like pigeons to their coops, they cannot help returning. In their very form, these novels, in which conflict finds neither psychological justification nor narrative resolution, register "Indian problems" with a cartographer's watchtower remove: Narayan is showing us the shape of a people being strangled by the contour of their land.

With his fourth novel, "The English Teacher" (1945), Narayan's point of view began to change, and this change is almost certainly related to a tragic event in his life. In the novel, Krishna, the protagonist, is, like earlier Narayan heroes, unhappy with his place in the world, "constantly nagged by the feeling that [he] was doing the wrong work." One day, Krishna and his wife, Susila—their happy marriage nothing like the miserable one of "The Dark Room"—go house-hunting. Strolling through the grounds of one property, Susila takes leave of Krishna to use an outhouse in a distant corner of the garden. Once she closes the door, though, it jams, trapping her in the fetid, fly-filled dark. When Krishna, who grows concerned at her absence, hears Susila's cries and locates the outhouse, kicking in its door, his wife is frantic: a fly, then a carrier of incurable diseases, has landed on her lip. Weeks later, she dies of typhoid.

Here, Krishna watches as Susila is borne to the funeral pyre:

> I see her face in daylight, in the open, and note the devastation of the weeks of fever—this shriveling heat has baked her face into a peculiar tinge of pale yellow. The purple cotton *sari* which I bought her on another day is wound round her and going to burn with her.
>
> The priest and the carriers are ceaselessly shouting for someone or other. Basket after basket of dry cowdung fuel is brought and dumped. . . . Lively discussion over prices and quality goes on. The trappings of trade do not leave us even here. Some hairy man sits under a tree and asks for alms. I am unable to do anything, but quietly watch in numbness. . . . I'm an imbecile, incapable of doing anything or answering any questions. . . .
>
> They build up a pyre, place her on it, cover her up with layers of fuel. . . . Leaving only the face and a part of her chest out, four layers deep down. I pour ghee on and drop the fire.



Narayan, once an English teacher like Krishna, lost his own young wife, Rajam, to typhoid, in 1939, after just such an encounter with a fly. Her death affected Narayan deeply. "The world appears very vacant and vague now," he told Greene in a letter, "and I too feel dead." For years, Narayan was unable to write, but, when he resumed, his books had changed—a change that was both a function of what he had lost and what, through the nature of that loss, he discovered. Narayan had first seen his wife on a street corner and had courted her against the conventions of the time, which favored arranged marriages. Having already ignored convention, the couple then learned that their horoscopes—the consideration of which was essential to marriage—deemed them incompatible: Narayan and Rajam were told that they must not marry. Were they to defy the stars, their charts made clear, Narayan would be a young widower. Deciding that superstitions and conventions did not apply to him, Narayan married the woman he loved. When the tragedy came, it seems to have instilled in him a deep sense of the inexorability of fate, a conviction that, naturally, influenced his view of character. "We are what we are," Narayan later told a biographer. "Whether you grow older, more decrepit, inside, the sense of awareness, of being, is the same throughout. I don't see any difference between myself when I was seven years old in Madras and now here in Mysore. The chap inside is the same, unchanged."

If the novels that Narayan wrote before the death of his wife were all documents of frustrated flight, those that came after chart the comedy of trying to resist fate at all. Now resistance isn't so much futile as fundamental to our humanness: we are always resisting only ourselves, a fact that—once you get over the abject horror of it—is really very funny. As the titles suggest—"The Printer of Malgudi" (1949); "The Financial Expert" (1952); "The Guide" (1958); "The Vendor of Sweets" (1967); "The Painter of Signs" (1976)—the protagonists of Narayan's mature novels are all defined by their lot in life. All the books are comic, animated by the degree to which the inner self, however much it might question its place in the world, is constantly shown to be stubbornly consistent. These are not documents of frustration but, rather, delicately tuned farces of being.

The richest of these is "The Guide" (Penguin Classics; $14). Upon his release from prison, a man must once again find a place for himself in the world. Raju, when we meet him, is sitting on steps that lead into a river, the very river where Savitri failed to end her life. Raju has no suicidal thoughts, only worries and sorrows. At the opening of the novel, a stranger approaches:

> Raju welcomed the intrusion—something to relieve the loneliness of the place. The man stood gazing reverentially on his face. Raju felt amused and embarrassed. "Sit down if you like," Raju said, to break the spell. The other accepted the suggestion with a grateful nod and went down the river steps to wash his feet and face, came up wiping himself dry with the end of a checkered yellow towel on his shoulder, and took his seat two steps below the granite slab on which Raju was sitting cross-legged as if it were a throne, beside an ancient shrine. The branches of the trees canopying the river rustled and trembled with the agitation of birds and monkeys settling down for the night. Upstream beyond the hills the sun was setting. Raju waited for the other to say something. But he was too polite to open a conversation.

It transpires that the man, a villager named Velan, is not being polite but reverential: Raju's seated pose by the shrine has led Velan to mistake him for a holy man. This initial error furnishes the book's premise; Raju, content to be misconstrued, begins dispensing advice to Velan, and then to his neighbors. It is, after all, to Raju's profit: his worshippers bring him offerings of food, leaving him no reason to go anywhere else. Sweetly comic sections in which Raju shares his wisdom—inscrutable non-answers that exhort the villagers to seek answers within themselves—are all narrated in the third person. They alternate with Raju's first-person account of the life that has brought him to this pass: his childhood in his father's shop; his work as a successful tour guide, ignorant of history but adept at spinning colorful lies about attractions; his seduction of a tourist's wife; and his attempt to defraud the woman by forging her name. This is the act that lands him in prison, and there is a comic counterpoint between the legal punishments for not being oneself and the worldly rewards that such behavior attracts. As Raju concludes his life story, and as his fame as a spiritual guide ironically reaches its apex, we realize that he has been confessing his misdeeds to Velan. Raju asks if Velan has heard his confession:

> "Yes, Swami."
>
> Raju was taken aback at still being addressed as "Swami."
>
> "What do you think of it?"
>
> Velan looked quite pained at having to answer such a question. "I don't know why you tell me all this, Swami. It's very kind of you to address at such length your humble servant."

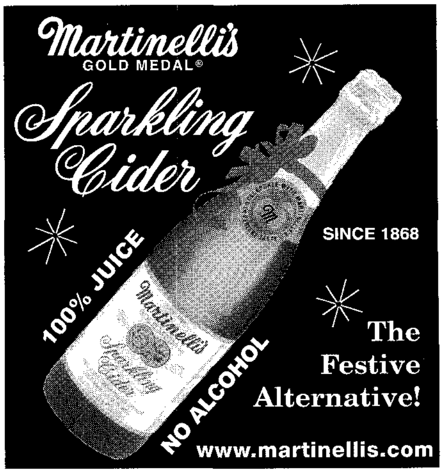
In a Western comedy of mistaken identity, the revelation of the hero's falsity would be a likely dénouement. But, in Narayan's comedy, the joke is that Raju's sense of who he is is trumped by the world's view of him. After all, if one acts as a guide—dispensing wisdom, fasting when appropriate, attracting followers—one is a guide.

It is through this idea—that a self is not a private entity but a fixed, public one—that Narayan's novels break most meaningfully with those of the West and establish their own tradition. Their significance derives less from the mere fact of being some of the first important Indian fiction in English than from being the first English writing to infuse the novel with an Eastern existential perspective. Though crammed with incident, Narayan's novels do not—indeed, cannot—chart a progression toward the formation of character. His characters, "strangled by the contour of their land," are doubly circumscribed: by their nation's political fate and by the inexorable fate of Hindu cosmology. In Narayan's world, no less than in his lived life, we do not become; rather, we become aware of that which, for good or ill, we cannot help being. Through the novel, a form long used to show how things change, Narayan mapped the movements of unchanging things. ♦

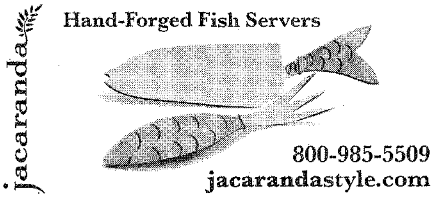
From the Times.

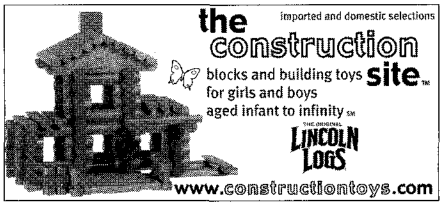
The Norway or brown rat, the species prevalent on the East Coast, has been around since the Colonial days, but systematic efforts to control the pests did not begin until the late 19th century, with the hiring of rat catchers paid by the rat.

As a community service?


Martinelli's GOLD MEDAL®
Sparkling Cider
SINCE 1868
100% JUICE
NO ALCOHOL
The Festive Alternative!
www.martinellis.com

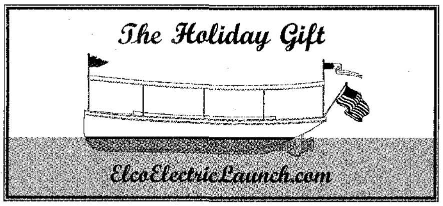
A Tale of Two Kitties
pendant
w 18" chain
14k - $550
Sterling - $125
Sofia JEWELRY.COM
800 939 0188
www.sofiajewelry.com


jacaranda
Hand-Forged Fish Servers
800-985-5509
jacarandastyle.com


the construction site™
imported and domestic selections
blocks and building toys
for girls and boys
aged infant to infinity℠
THE ORIGINAL LINCOLN LOGS
www.constructiontoys.com

美
ERIK THOMSEN
ASIAN ART
NOW IN NEW YORK!
Japanese Screens, Zen paintings,
bamboo art, silver, gold lacquer
Erik Thomsen LLC
Asian Art
224 East 83 Street NY NY 10028
212 288 2588 erikthomsen.com

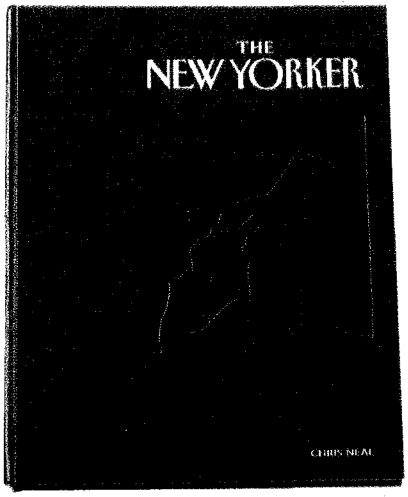
davidmorgan.com
David Morgan 800-324-4934
11812 N Creek Pkwy N, Suite 103•Bothell WA 98011


The Holiday Gift
ElcoElectricLaunch.com

Advertisement

NEW YORKER DESK DIARY

Order Your 2007 Desk Diary Today



Available in four colors, with an elegant new cover design.

Order online to save $5 and receive FREE personalization.

www.cartoonbank.com

1-877-408-4269
M-F, 9 A.M.-6 P.M., E.S.T.

Standard diary: $34.95
Personalized diary: $37.95
Add $7.00 U.S. S&H, $10.00 Canada

also available at
THE NEW YORKER STORE
www.thenewyorkerstore.com

BOOKS

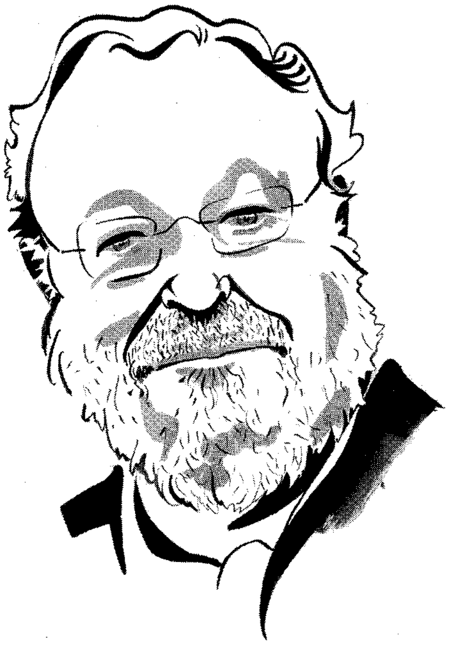
FIRST BITE

What's eating Hannibal Lecter?

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new Thomas Harris novel goes by the title of "Hannibal Rising" (Delacorte; $27.95). This has the effect of making Dr. Hannibal Lecter sound like a soufflé, a fever chart, or a storm—all comparisons that the good doctor, who prides himself as an epicure and a force of nature, would be bound to welcome. This is his fourth outing in print. He made his blushing début in "Red Dragon" (1981), then returned to the fray in "The Silence of the Lambs" (1988) and "Hannibal" (1999). As the dates testify, there has been a decorous interval between appearances, as if Lecter, like any other star who understands the value of rarity, were keen to insure that his public should be neither glutted nor bored. Naturally, he himself never suffers from boredom, floating far above such vulgar impedimenta as ennui, and free to disport himself within his "memory palace." This spacious and well-appointed dwelling is located, according to the opening sentence of "Hannibal Rising," "in the darkness at the center of his mind." Typical Lecter. The rest of us have to make do with a memory shed, or a mildewed memory cupboard filled with memory junk. He gets a palace.

Our hero began life, we learn from the new book, in prewar Lithuania. He lived in Lecter Castle, which has been the family seat of the Lecters since the time of Hannibal the Grim (1365-1428). That is a pleasantly morbid joke with which to start the book, but anybody who hopes that it will herald a feast of mirth from Thomas the Funny will turn the final page without a smile. We are on serious ground here, and one of the tasks of the novel is to see it hallowed, defiled, and then reconsecrated. There are images of a childhood Eden, in which Hannibal plays with his little sister, Mischa, but these are erased by the arrival of German troops, aided by a gang of collaborative local thugs. For three and a half years, the family—headed by Count Lecter, Hannibal's father—survives in a hunting lodge in the woods, but at last the thugs catch up with them. Everybody dies except Hannibal, although we are led to believe that something in his soul, too, has perished, as a result of seeing Mischa killed and eaten. It remains possible, though unconfirmed, that he unwittingly drank hot soup made from her bones.



Thomas Harris

PAUL HAMLYN

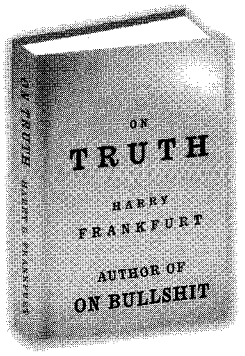
The rest of the story, for all its complications, is a plain tale of revenge. Young Hannibal is transferred to postwar France in the care of his uncle Robert, a painter who is married to a Japanese woman named Lady Murasaki. Hannibal impresses her with his flower arranging. "Ahhh. We would call that *moribana*, the slanting style," she says. When the uncle dies, she is left not just a Lady but a widow: double the allure, for someone as choosy as Lecter. From here he becomes an exemplary medical student, noted as an anatomical draftsman; in the last pages, he is offered an internship at Johns Hopkins. In the intervening years, he keeps himself busy by tracking down and slaughtering as many of his sister's killers as he can find. One has his head pulled off by a horse; another has the letter "M," for Mischa, carved into his flesh; another, jostled by preserved cadavers, is drowned in formalin solution; and so on. There is also another victim, unconnected with events in Lithuania—a porky French butcher, whom Lecter decapitates for having insulted his aunt in the marketplace. As Lecter will announce to Clarice Starling, many years hence, "Discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to me." The author adds, "It was as though committing murders had purged him of lesser rudeness."

In short, Lecter is and always will be a snob. He is not, whatever his ambitions, a gentleman, partly because he is a homicidal maniac but also because no gentleman would dream of actually telling you how much he values courtesy. To proclaim one's virtue, however humbly, is the prerogative of the Pharisee. (Humbert Humbert, another European refugee on a New World spree, has the same weakness.) The snobbery of Lecter is grounded in his being, to borrow a phrase from Jeeves, "somewhat acutely alive to the existence of class distinctions." A useful sensitivity, not least when it comes to dealing with the somewhat acutely dead. Like a lily-bearing aesthete of the eighteen-nineties, Lecter reveres the innocent, the comely, and the delicate, reserving his distaste for bestial men—and it is always men. (The line that he addressed in "Hannibal" to the Florentine detective, "I'm giving serious thought to eating your wife," immediately struck me as less of a promise than a taunt.) That is why the revelation, in the first chapter of "Hannibal Rising," that his father was a count, and therefore that the serial shedder of blood has veins that run with truest blue, comes as such a viscous disappointment. There was something amusing in the sleek, aristocratic demeanor of Dr. Lecter as he stood, or languidly reclined, in his prison cell to receive Clarice Starling, and Harris's decision to trace that back to a genuine aristocracy is both simplistic and dim. There we were, taking a naughty, unfashionable delight in Lecter's desire to scorn the uneducated ("I forget your generation can't read, Clarice"), and breathlessly following his plans to enslave them in his schemes, when all along he was dreaming of a real servant class, lost in the ancestral mist of his Lithuanian estates. I blame the Count:

> I myself am of an old family, and to live in a new house would kill me. . . . We Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may lie amongst the common dead.

That is the owner of Castle Dracula, of course, as reported by Bram Stoker, in 1897, but Dracula and Lecter *père* hail from roughly the same period, and, given the aroma of inbreeding that pervades European nobility, they might be second cousins. I certainly detect a glint of Stoker's eternal throat-biter, with his "peculiarly sharp white teeth," in his distant but no less ravening relation: "Dr. Lecter has small white teeth," as we were first informed in "Red Dragon." Redness, too, glows through the Lecter corpus as unfailingly as a sign outside a brothel. Obviously, there is the scarlet rush of gore ("A wet crunch and a pulsing arterial spray"), but more tranquil, though no less frightening, is the color of the villain's knowing gaze: "Dr. Lecter's eyes are maroon and they reflect the light in pinpoints of red." Thus does Clarice peer into them, like an astronomer inspecting a dying sun, on her first trip to the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, in "The Silence of the Lambs," but again we could be back in Transylvania. In Stoker's words, "His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them." Where are you supposed to look, when your host is having a hissy fit?

The failure of "Hannibal Rising," which seems to me absolute, is easily explained. It stems from the author's newfound conviction that Hannibal, too, can be easily explained. Until now, Dr. Lecter seemed destined to be one of the immortals, lounging in the pantheon with a copy of Dante and a case of Château Pétrus, and conversing lightly with his peers—Professor Moriarty, perhaps, who was also "a man of good birth and excellent education." So said Sherlock Holmes, observing that the criminal tendencies of his enemy were "rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers." Yet Lecter's place in the literature of nightmare is not altogether secure. From my constant and unhealthy rereading of the earlier books, I have



Truth matters!

Get some.

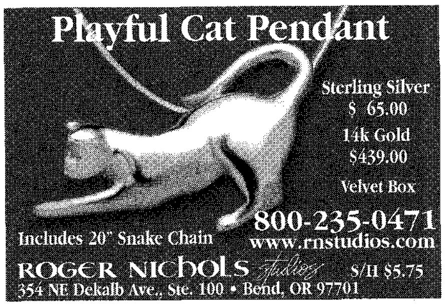
Give some.

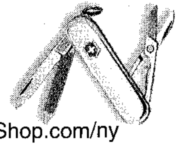
aaknopf.com

COSMOPOLITAN ELEGANCE AND REFINED LIFESTYLE AT A ONE-OF-A-KIND RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS IN MONTREAL.

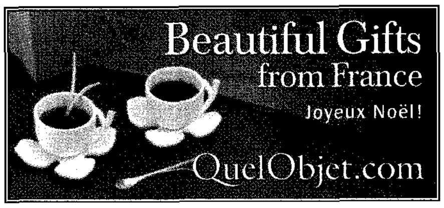
CONDOS FROM $209,000 TO OVER A MILLION
1.888.333.7770 333SHERBROOKE.COM

3 | 3 | 3
SHERBROOKE


Playful Cat Pendant
Sterling Silver $ 65.00
14k Gold $439.00
Velvet Box
Includes 20" Snake Chain
800-235-0471
www.rnstudios.com
ROGER NICHOLS Studios S/H $5.75
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701

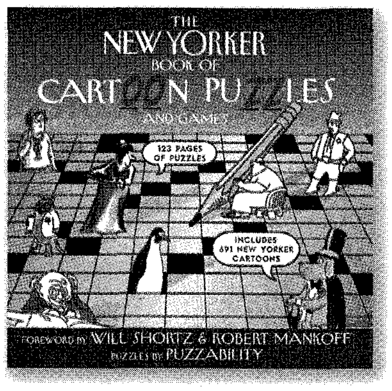

VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
A Timeless Classic
Engraving
Large Selection
www.SwissKnifeShop.com/ny

ANTIQUE NAVAJO TEXTILES
ANTIQUE AMERICAN INDIAN
POTTERY - BASKETS - ARTIFACTS
PAINTINGS - WOUNAAN BASKETS
WWW.MICHAELSMITHGALLERY.COM/NY
(505) 995-1013
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO


Beautiful Gifts
from France
Joyeux Noël!
QuelObjet.com

CARTOON PUZZLES

The Perfect Book for Puzzle Fans


THE NEW YORKER BOOK OF CARTOON PUZZLES AND GAMES
123 PAGES OF PUZZLES
INCLUDES 691 NEW YORKER CARTOONS
FOREWORD BY WILL SHORTZ & ROBERT MANKOFF
PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

123 pages of crosswords, acrostics, and one-of-a-kind challenges, based on classic *New Yorker* cartoons.

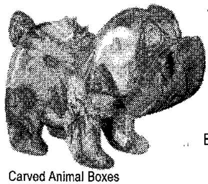
Now Only $14.95

WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company
1-800-897-8666

THE Asset Allocation ADVISOR
FOR ENDOWMENT MANAGERS AND FIDUCIARIES

A quarterly journal of market information and analysis for **the most important decision** in endowment management.

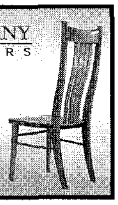
860.570.0270 | www.aametrics.com



Beaux Wow Gifts!
mfaeronga.com
Hand carved & painted Gifts
Bowls -Boxes- Lazy Susans- Trays
Carved Animal Boxes
(520) 798 - 1086

JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
ORDER BY DEC. 20TH FOR HOLIDAY DELIVERY!
Raised Monogram
AVAILABLE IN STERLING, GOLD & PLATINUM. FROM $590
VIEW YOUR MONOGRAM ONLINE! PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

GARY WEEKS & COMPANY
FURNITUREMAKERS
Comfort and satisfaction guaranteed or your money back, including shipping.
888-334-0307
www.garyweeks.com



learned that Lecter lives and breathes only when five essential conditions are fulfilled. "The Silence of the Lambs" meets all five; "Hannibal Rising," none. The conditions are:

1. Lecter must be incarcerated.
2. He must be in America.
3. He must be peripheral to the plot (the capture of another killer), however central he is to the atmosphere.
4. He must attract the professional interest of a woman.
5. He must be as insoluble as Iago.

The doctor himself was famously insistent on this last point in "The Silence of the Lambs," stating that "nothing happened to me, Officer Starling. *I* happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences."

The new book is just such a reduction. Were it the kind of reduction that Lecter, a fine cook, prepares in "Hannibal" as a juniper-tinged sauce for his grilled tenderloin, it would slip down nicely. But all we get is influences, beginning with the loss of home and family, plus the implication that these were the making, or the warping, of Hannibal Lecter. If that were logically the case, then anyone who witnessed or endured savagery in the Second World War would be doomed to revisit its terrors on the peacetime world. Half of Europe, even now, would be dining off the other half. Hitherto, the champions of Lecter have ascribed to him a core of monstrosity, no more malleable than a diamond, and native to him alone; if so, it is brushed aside and squandered by the uncovering of his past. With "Hannibal Rising," we watch the legend sink.

Why did Harris pursue this line of inquiry? He has written one great Lecter book, "The Silence of the Lambs," and two lesser ones, so why produce a fourth that is not merely the weakest but that makes you wonder if the others were so gripping after all? There is a puff of grand delusion here, of the sort to which all thriller-writers are susceptible. Compare "The Friends of Eddie Coyle," an early novel by George V. Higgins, with the bulky solemnities of his later work; or, for that matter, "Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy" with more recent le Carré like "The Night Manager" or "The Constant Gardener." At some point, each man started to hear that he was so much more than the master of a genre (as if that were an ignoble thing to be), and responded to such flattery by expanding his fiction beyond its confines, not realizing that what he felt as a restriction was in fact its natural shape. That is how a writer loses thrust and form, and how Thomas Harris went from this, a jailbreak in "The Silence of the Lambs":

> "Lieutenant, it looks like he's got two six-shot .38s. We heard three rounds fired and the dump pouches on the gunbelts are still full, so he may just have nine left. Advise SWAT it's +Ps jacketed hollowpoints. This guy favors the face."

To this, a love duet from "Hannibal Rising":

> "I see you and the cricket sings in concert with my heart."
>
> "My heart hops at the sight of you, who taught my heart to sing."

What the hell is going on here? Where is the damn SWAT team when you need it? And will somebody tell me how the guy who favored the face—the adult Lecter, armed and on the loose—emerged from the schoolboy with the hopping heart, trading insect quips with Lady Murasaki? They are lifted by moonlight, apparently, "to a place above ghost-ridden earth, a place unhaunted, and being there together was enough." Ahhh. We would call that *moribund*, the swollen style. Harris has developed aspirations to be a prose poet, not remembering that the jailbreak, with its brace of .38s, was already poetry in motion—hard, metallic, and perfectly timed. Lecter survived on his wits, and scared us out of ours. He kept leaping into the present tense, as if out of a darkened doorway ("Dr. Lecter's eyes are maroon"), and, because we feared that he could be lurking anywhere, we assumed that he had come from nowhere. Now we know better, and the outcome couldn't be worse. Hannibal the Unboreable, thanks to his overzealous creator, has dwindled to less of a monster and grown into more of a bore. He would kill me for saying so, but it's the truth. ♦

From the White Plains (N.Y.) Journal News.

The first decorated Christmas tree to be put up in a church in the United States caused a stir. It was at the Zion Lutheran Church in Cleveland in 1851. Heinrich Christian Schwan, the newly appointed pastor, chopped down an evergreen in the forest near his parsonage, decorated it with his wife, Emma, with cookies, colored ribbons, nuts, and candles, and, according to the church's Web site, placed it in a prominent spot in the chancel.

And up she goes, each December.

BOOKS FROM OUR PAGES

NONFICTION

Let Me Finish, *by Roger Angell (Harcourt; $25).*

The Afterlife, *by Donald Antrim (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $21).*

Heat, *by Bill Buford (Knopf; $25.95).*

Operation Homecoming, *edited by Andrew Carroll (Random House; $26.95).*

We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live, *by Joan Didion (Everyman's Library; $30).*

Creationists, *by E. L. Doctorow (Random House; $24.95).*

I Feel Bad About My Neck, *by Nora Ephron (Knopf; $19.95).*

To Hell with All That, *by Caitlin Flanagan (Little, Brown; $22.95).*

The Discomfort Zone, *by Jonathan Franzen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22).*

Prisoners, *by Jeffrey Goldberg (Knopf; $25).*

Through the Children's Gate, *by Adam Gopnik (Knopf; $25).*

Oracle Bones, *by Peter Hessler (HarperCollins; $26.95).*

Field Notes from a Catastrophe, *by Elizabeth Kolbert (Bloomsbury; $22.95).*

Uncommon Carriers, *by John McPhee (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $24).*

The Naked Tourist, *by Lawrence Osborne (North Point Press; $24).*

The Din in the Head, *by Cynthia Ozick (Houghton Mifflin; $24).*

The Shakespeare Wars, *by Ron Rosenbaum (Random House; $35).*

About Alice, *by Calvin Trillin (Random House; $14.95).*

My Lives, *by Edmund White (Ecco; $25.95).*

The Looming Tower, *by Lawrence Wright (Knopf; $27.95).*

FICTION

Alentejo Blue, *by Monica Ali (Scribner; $24).*

Last Evenings on Earth, *by Roberto Bolaño, translated from the Spanish by Chris Andrews (New Directions; $23.95).*

The Brief History of the Dead, *by Kevin Brockmeier (Pantheon; $22.95).*

The Dead Fish Museum, *by Charles D'Ambrosio (Knopf; $22).*

Whiteman, *by Tony D'Souza (Harcourt; $22).*

The Lay of the Land, *by Richard Ford (Knopf; $26.95).*

Come Together, Fall Apart, *by Cristina Henríquez (Riverhead; $24.95).*

All Aunt Hagar's Children, *by Edward P. Jones (Amistad; $25.95).*

Matters of Life & Death, *by Bernard MacLaverty (Norton; $23.95).*

Gallatin Canyon, *by Thomas McGuane (Knopf; $24).*

The View from Castle Rock, *by Alice Munro (Knopf; $25.95).*

Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman, *by Haruki Murakami, translated from the Japanese by Philip Gabriel and Jay Rubin (Knopf; $24.95).*

Some Fun, *by Antonya Nelson (Scribner; $22).*

High Lonesome, *by Joyce Carol Oates (Ecco; $34.95).*

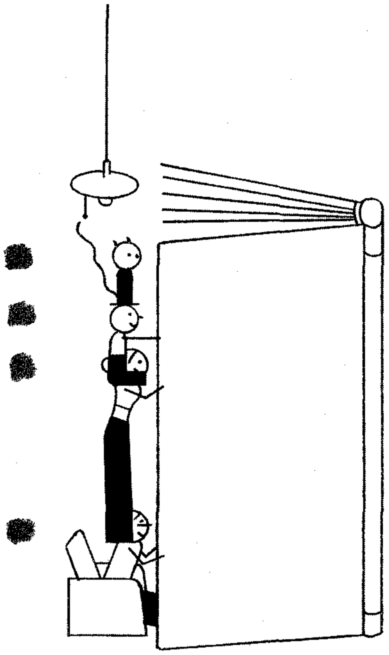
St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves, *by Karen Russell (Knopf; $22).*

In Persuasion Nation, *by George Saunders (Riverhead; $23.95).*

Absurdistan, *by Gary Shteyngart (Random House; $24.95).*

The Best People in the World, *by Justin Tussing (HarperCollins; $24.95).*

Memoirs of a Muse, *by Lara Vapnyar (Pantheon; $22.95).*



LAURENT CILLUFFO

POETRY

Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box, *by Elizabeth Bishop (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30).*

The Republic of Poetry, *by Martín Espada (Norton; $23.95).*

Everything Preserved, *by Landis Everson (Graywolf; $15).*

The Book of Martyrdom and Artifice, *by Allen Ginsberg (Da Capo; $27.50).*

In the Middle Distance, *by Linda Gregg (Graywolf; $14).*

District and Circle, *by Seamus Heaney (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $20).*

Strong Is Your Hold, *by Galway Kinnell (Houghton Mifflin; $25).*

Selected Poems, *by Czeslaw Milosz (Ecco; $24.95).*

New & Selected Poems, *by Stanley Moss (Seven Stories Press; $18.95).*

Horse Latitudes, *by Paul Muldoon (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22).*

One Hidden Stuff, *by Barbara Ras (Penguin; $16).*

The Dirty Side of the Storm, *by Martha Serpas (Norton; $23.95).*

Man and Camel, *by Mark Strand (Knopf; $24).*

Collected Poems, *by C. K. Williams (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $40).*

Scar Tissue, *by Charles Wright (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22).*

Earthly Meditations, *by Robert Wrigley (Penguin; $20).*

CARTOONS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND ART

From the Very Big Desk of . . . , *by Charles Barsotti (Bulfinch; $19.95).*

Because I'm the Child Here and I Said So, *by Pat Byrnes (Andrews McMeel; $9.95).*

Theories of Everything, *by Roz Chast (Bloomsbury; $45).*

Dogs and Cats, *by P. S. Mueller (Jones Books; $9.95).*

After the Flood, *by Robert Polidori (Steidl; $90).*

You Had Me at Bow Wow, *by Jack Ziegler (Vendome; $19.95).*

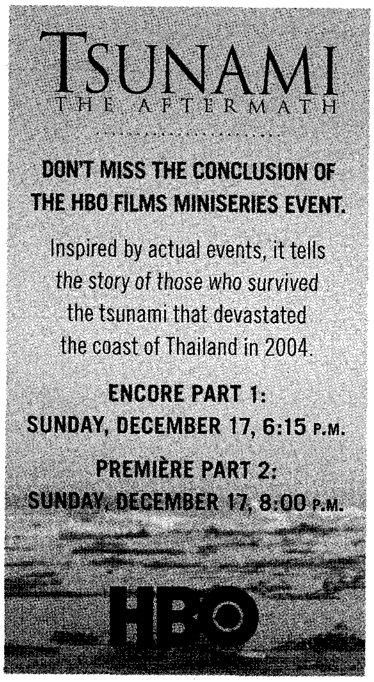
AND . . .

The New Yorker Book of Cartoon Puzzles and Games *(Black Dog & Leventhal; $17.95).*

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.



TSUNAMI
THE AFTERMATH

DON'T MISS THE CONCLUSION OF THE HBO FILMS MINISERIES EVENT.

Inspired by actual events, it tells the story of those who survived the tsunami that devastated the coast of Thailand in 2004.

ENCORE PART 1:
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6:15 P.M.

PREMIÈRE PART 2:
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 8:00 P.M.

HBO

Playful Cat Pin
www.rnstudios.com

STERLING SILVER $55
14K GOLD $390
14K GOLD W/DIAMOND EYE $411

1-800-235-0471 S/H $5.75
ROGER NICHOLS Studios
Velvet Box
354 NE Dekalb Ave., Ste. 100 • Bend, OR 97701

CENTER *for* FURNITURE CRAFTSMANSHIP

LEARN WOODWORKING
on the coast of Maine

www.woodschool.org 207-594-5611

Golf Digest PLACES TO PLAY
USA GOLF
PLAYING CARDS

What's in Your Hand?
♦ ♣ ♥ ♠
playing cards with a twist!
the perfect stocking stuffer!
www.inkstone.net 406-542-0270

10 Million Pieces!
China, Crystal, Silver, Collectibles
183,000 Patterns • Old/New • Buy/Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.®
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept YO
www.replacements.com®

THE THEATRE

POCKET-PICKING

Stealing from the rich and from the poor.

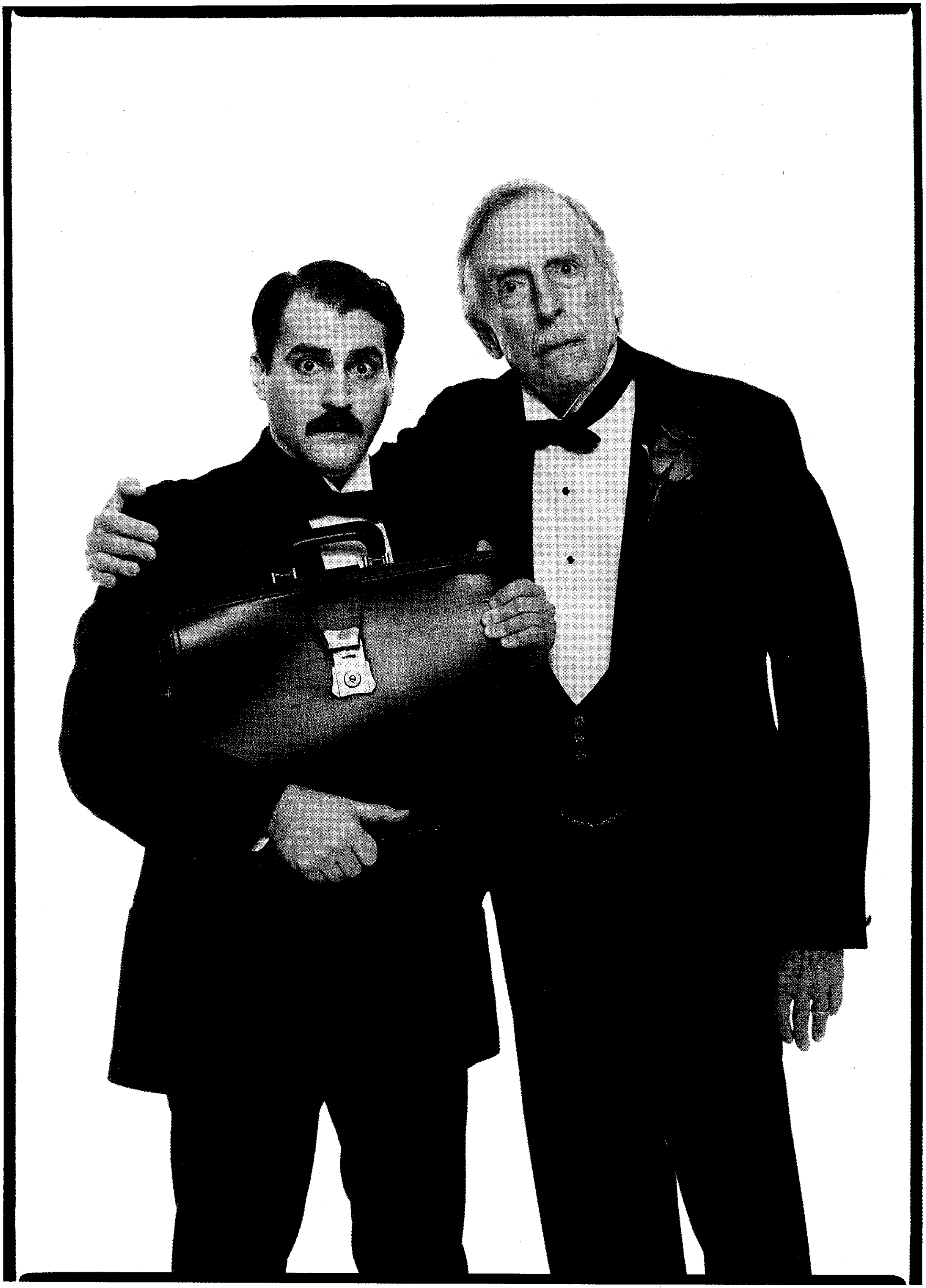
BY JOHN LAHR

"All classes are criminal, we live in an age of equality": Joe Orton's subversive mot came to mind as I listened to the craven upper-middle-class palaver of Harley Granville-Barker's 1905 play "The Voysey Inheritance" (directed by David Warren, at the Atlantic Theatre Company, in a muscular adaptation by David Mamet). Granville-Barker, who was an actor and director as well as a playwright, was largely responsible for staging the productions that established George Bernard Shaw's popularity in Britain; his own well-constructed plays display the influence of Shaw's early dialectical and social-realist affinities. For this story, set in the mahogany library of the Voysey family's luxurious country house, Granville-Barker turns the notion of property-as-theft into what the Edwardians would have called a ripping yarn. As it turns out, every stick of upholstered furniture, every scrap of fine food, every charmed detail in the affluent Voysey tableau is built on fraud—a scam perpetuated over two generations by successive heads of the family's distinguished law firm—until Edward Voysey (Michael Stuhlbarg), the dour, dutiful son of the current scion, uncovers accounting irregularities in his father's books and confronts him. "The firm is bankrupt," Edward says to the beloved, ailing paterfamilias. "What have you done with the money?"

"The Voysey Inheritance" returns Mamet, whose "American Buffalo" and "Glengarry Glen Ross" are two of the finest plays about the spiritual attrition of American capitalism, to his favorite subject: business. "You know what is free enterprise?" Teach, the punk in "American Buffalo" who plots to steal a valuable coin collection, says. "The Freedom Of the *Individual* . . . to Embark on Any Fucking Course that he sees fit . . . In order to secure his honest chance to make a profit." In "The Voysey Inheritance," theft is of a more refined sort, and rapacity is hidden beneath a veneer of respectability. But, if Mamet writes with his pinkie finger up, he is nonetheless mining his familiar dark-comic mother lode of barbarity disguised as practicality. In order to protect the family fortune, Mr. Voysey (the urbane Fritz Weaver) has, unbeknownst to his clients, siphoned off capital from their trust funds and estates into his own account, from which he doles out interest, so that the customers never know they've been bilked. The strategy is a form of gambling; in this game of catch-up, the father bets that he can outperform the market, filling his own pockets while replacing what he has stolen.

To Edward, the discovery is a cataclysm. "We have defrauded everyone who has trusted us," he says. Rather like a con man explaining the art of three-card monte—"Business nowadays is a confidence trick," Mr. Voysey says in the original version—the father coolly takes his scandalized son through the accounts, a house of cards that has grown ever higher on his thirty-year watch. The fraud was what Mr. Voysey calls "my inheritance." "I'd hoped it wasn't to be yours," he says, while rationalizing the crime as a heroic attempt to protect both the firm and the family's name. "We do what we must in this world," he says. "Was I to see my father ruined and disgraced without lifting a finger to help him? . . . Not to mention the interest of the clients." Against Mr. Voysey's slick defensive sophistry, the play pits Edward's clear-eyed staunchness. To him, two wrongs don't make a right. The scene builds artfully, until the jejune Edward finds himself boxed in by his father's revelations. "You're my partner, and my son," Mr. Voysey tells him. "And you'll inherit the business."

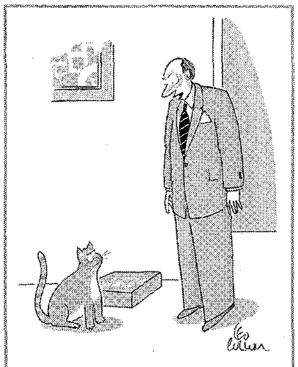
In collapsing a five-act play into two, Mamet has shrunk the original struggle between father and son, especially the swaggering of Mr. Voysey, styled by Granville-Barker as a bit of a "buccaneer" who browbeats his timid, self-conscious son for his lack of business acumen



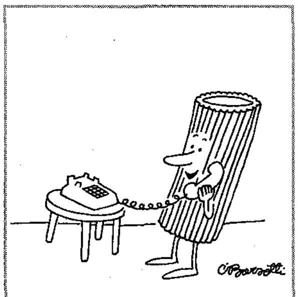
Michael Stuhlbarg and Fritz Weaver, in Harley Granville-Barker's "The Voysey Inheritance." Photograph by Steve Pyke.

Advertisement

CARTOON PRINTS


"Never, ever, think outside the box."

Leo Cullum, 1998


"Fusilli, you crazy bastard! How are you?"

Charles Barsotti, 1994

Virtually every cartoon ever published in *The New Yorker*. Order online at The Cartoon Bank.

Search by artist, topic, or date.

Framed $150 small, $295 large

Matted: $125 small, $250 large

WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM

1-800-897-8666

("You're about as fit for this job as a babe unborne") and for his bookish interest in philosophy ("Your ethics of this and your ethics of that, the sort of garden oats which men seem to sow nowadays"). By cutting back the family politics and making Edward a blunt, stalwart terrier from the beginning, Mamet substitutes combative urgency for social satire; he raises the stakes both of the emotion and of the brutality.

Mr. Voysey's subsequent death puts Edward in charge of the firm. He chooses to expose the fraud, and devotes himself to recouping the money. The family is forced to turn over the bulk of its inheritance. The real bankruptcy facing almost all the Voyseys, however, is moral. The remainder of the evening savors the secret ambush of Edward's relatives as they try to bend principles and justify their greed. Edward's bombastic older brother, Major Booth Voysey (C. J. Wilson), invokes his late father's bravery in dealing with "such a frightful task." Mr. Voysey's corrupt accountant, Mr. Peacey (Steven Goldstein), gets stroppy at the idea that he'll be getting no Christmas bonus and at the implication that he is a thief. "Worse than a thief," Edward says. "You're content that others should steal for you." Peacey counters provocatively, "And who isn't?" The moral maze gets even more complex when Mr. Voysey's best friend, George Booth (Peter Maloney), and the family clergyman, Reverend Colpus (Geddeth Smith), join forces—in a sort of class action, which Mamet dramatizes from what was merely exposition in the original—to strike what they conceive of as a Christian deal. They will not prosecute if the firm agrees to pay interest on the loss until it is made up. Their "Christian impulses," however, are simply another push for profit. "You'd impoverish the smaller investors, in return for your silence," Edward says, laughing away their modest proposal. His response underlines the fact that "The Voysey Inheritance" is, in the end, not so much about business as about honor, a concept that can seem almost Chaucerian in our soiled times.

In the Pittsburgh diner where August Wilson set his thrilling play "Two Trains Running" (in revival at the Signature, under the direction of Lou Bellamy), there's little business and a lot of honor in the way the characters choose to lead their hardscrabble lives. "Two Trains Running" is the sixth entry in Wilson's masterly ten-play cycle, covering the African-American experience in the twentieth century. In this play, which takes place in 1969, everyone does the math—Memphis (Frankie Faison), the owner of the diner, calculates the price he'll accept from the city, which wants to take over his building for urban renewal; Wolf (Ron Cephas Jones) runs the numbers; and the jailbird Sterling (Chad L. Coleman) tries to sell his watch to get a stake—but nothing adds up. "Seventeen jewels! And I can't get five dollars for it," Sterling says. Even the demented Hambone (Leon Addison Brown), who was once promised a ham for painting the local butcher's fence and was given a chicken instead, lives at the caprice of the white world offstage, which changes the rules to suit itself. The broken promise drives him crazy; he haunts the shop and the neighborhood, screaming, "I want my ham. He gonna give me my ham!" In Granville-Barker, the theft is hidden; in Wilson, it's out in the open, in the impoverishment of an entire race. "People kill me talking about niggers is lazy," the diner's philosopher, Holloway (Arthur French), says at one point. "Niggers is the most hardworking people in the world. Worked three hundred years for free. And didn't take no lunch hour."

Bellamy, whose Penumbra Theatre, in Minneapolis, was an inspiration to Wilson, can't duplicate the subtleties of the 1992 Broadway production; his ensemble is competent without being inspired. Nonetheless, from the first beat the actors project us into the extraordinary folk world of Wilson's imagining. They hear his music, even if they can't always produce the full heartbreaking power of his poetic sound. Wilson died this year; as time goes by, his work will be recognized as one of the twentieth century's greatest dramatic achievements. His plays swing with the pulse of a people. "A nigger with a gun is bad news," Holloway says. "You say the word 'gun' in the same sentence with the word 'nigger' and you in trouble. The white man panic. Unless you say, 'The policeman shot the nigger with his gun.'" That's magnificent writing. I left the theatre exhilarated, glad to have been alive in Wilson's time. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

FIGHTING MEN

"The Good German" and "Apocalypto."

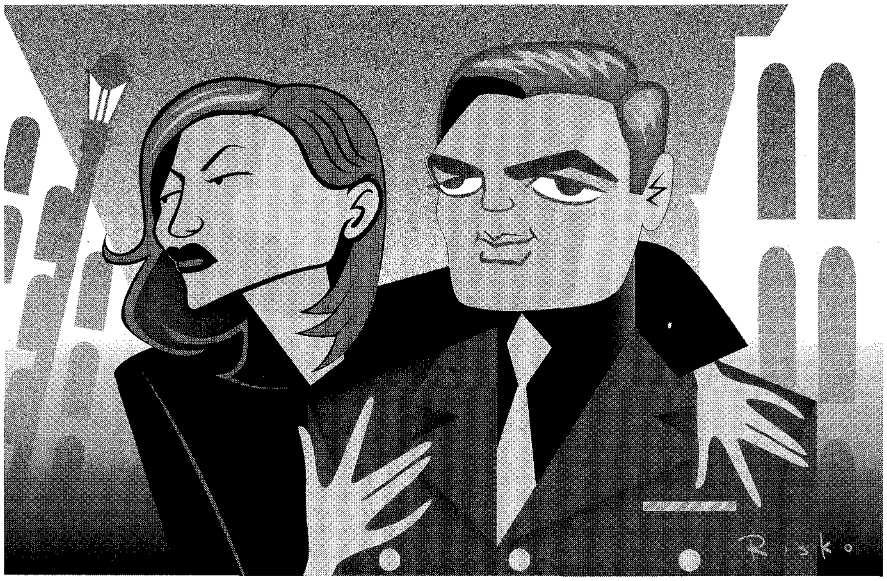
BY ANTHONY LANE

Everybody knows that Berlin, in the immediate wake of the Second World War, was a city in fragments. It was split into four zones—the American, the British, the French, and the Russian—but the divisions ran deeper than that. The German capital was at once a ruin, a prize, and a land of opportunity, although what you made of it depended on whether you were Truman, Stalin, Churchill, a black marketeer, a hooker, or a mother of small children, scrabbling for coal in the street.

This is the stage for Steven Soderbergh's "The Good German," which is set in Berlin in the late summer of 1945. George Clooney plays Jake Geismer, a reporter with *The New Republic.* As a member of the press corps, he has a rank and a uniform, and I intend no slur upon that publication when I say that he must be the spiffiest example of the human male ever to emerge from its bureau. Geismer, who has flown in to cover the Potsdam Conference, is given a driver named Tully (Tobey Maguire) for the duration of his stay. We are meant to take this kid for a rube, although whenever a character refers to his mother's apple pie, as Tully does in the first fifteen minutes, you can be sure that something spicy is hiding under the crust. And so it proves: Tully—a thief and a bully, despite his youth—lifts Geismer's wallet and heads back to a gloomy apartment for a burst of rough sex with his girlfriend.

She is Lena Brandt (Cate Blanchett), who, before the war, it turns out, used to be a stringer and a bedmate for none other than Geismer. Before that, to judge by her spectral skin and ink-dark lips, she was also a close friend of Dr. Caligari. Her husband worked for a rocketry expert on Germany's V-2 program; were he still alive (and suspicions linger) he would be of consuming interest both to war-crimes investigators—because the Germans built the V-2 using disposable slave labor—and to American weapons designers. All of which means that Lena is, in every way, a wanted woman, and the movie spinning around her wants to be many things: an anguished romance, a murder mystery (a waterlogged corpse is discovered at Potsdam), and a dose of nasty film noir.

The issues touched upon here, with Geismer bumping into his old flame, burning for her anew, yet wondering if he should turn her in, could scarcely be more fraught; the wrestle between conscience and political expediency is as old as Sophocles. How, then, does "The Good German"—adapted by Paul Attanasio from Joseph Kanon's novel—wind up so insubstantial, its impact lasting no longer than a cigarette? What enticed Soderbergh, I would guess, was not a desire to make a movie about 1945 but the urge to pretend that he was locked in the same era. The film is shot in black-and-white, with credits of an antiquated plainness, fixed-length lenses, even a slice of what looks like back-projection. (What would he have used if the action took place in, say, 1380? Cameras woven from thatch?) The score, by Thomas Newman, apes the urgent lushness of the period, and Newman, to his credit, takes the only serious option, which is to delve into the emotional possibilities of pastiche until it ceases to be a game.



Cate Blanchett and George Clooney in Steven Soderbergh's Berlin movie.

ROBERT RISKO

Soderbergh, on the other hand, has such a gusto for movie history that he all but forgets that the films to which he pays homage were not themselves exercises in pure style. The feline prowlings of Orson Welles in "The Third Man," for instance, were not a chance for Carol Reed, the director, to practice his shadow patterns; they were a probing of Vienna's murk, horribly alive to Graham Greene's sense of the sewers that flow beneath the charms of civilization. "The Good German" is all dense grays and haze-edged whites, but they could be the tricks of a fashion photographer, and Clooney, as a director, made far more of his monochrome world in "Good Night, and Good Luck," which glided along on the kind of moral momentum for which "The Good German" so desperately pines. Here, both he and Blanchett struggle to keep their footing. It would help us (and them) to know whether their latest encounter was just plain bad luck, as in "Casablanca," or a conspiratorial setup—but that information is classified.

To be honest, the new film stares at "Casablanca" with mouth agape, like Woody Allen at the start of "Play It Again, Sam." Clooney gets his lonely Bogart moment, nursing a drink, and then, at the close, he stands with his departing love at an airport. We get the fuselage shining in the wet darkness, we get the cough and chug of propellers, we get the shock of a last revelation, and guess what: we don't give a damn. I hate to ask, but can a filmmaker be too much of a movie buff?

Buffs in New York, meanwhile, will be especially bemused by "The Good German," for they are still in the midst of the Roberto Rossellini season at MOMA. (It ends on December 22nd.) They will already have knelt in awe in front of his war triptych, consisting of "Rome, Open City" (1945), "Paisà" (1946), and "Germany, Year Zero" (1947). The last of those incomparable movies was shot in Berlin, with its cracked and carious buildings, but where Soderbergh is in search of a look, controlling every nuance of a reconstructed style, Rossellini is, more simply, in search of the truth. Not for a second is he slapdash, but somehow he seems, like Stendhal, to happen upon people and their various trials, and they in turn just happen to appear. You feel that he could comb the streets and rustle up a thousand dramas of comparable fervor. His hero is a bewildered boy, and the Berlin through which the youngster trots—and, at one heartbreaking point, plays hopscotch—is the real city, which by the end of 1945 was the home of an estimated fifty-three thousand lost children. Infant mortality, for the month in which "The Good German" starts, ran at sixty-six deaths for every hundred live births. "One doctor deduced that out of approximately 100,000 women raped in Berlin, some 10,000 died as a result, mostly from suicide": that statistic, culled from the aftermath of the Red Army's assault, and cited in Antony Beevor's "Berlin: The Downfall 1945," is one item in a roster of atrocity. Now, more than six decades later, is it our fate to gloss over such things? "The Good German" is clever and picturesque, and that is what makes it truly alarming: it takes a site of horrors and congratulates it on looking like a movie.

One shudders to think what Mel Gibson might do with the violation of Berlin. The extremity of what unfolded there, and on the Eastern Front, is a subject that few directors would choose to confront head-on, but it is now apparent, on the evidence of "The Passion of the Christ" and Gibson's latest film, "Apocalypto," that his interest in brute behavior—in humanity starting to fray and revert to the primitive—will never be exhausted. There is a moment, late in "Apocalypto," when the hero sinks into a marsh of black mud, only to rise from it, eyes shining through his mask of slime. He looks like the first man on earth, hatching out of a myth.

His name is Jaguar Paw (Rudy Youngblood), and he moves through the jungles of Central America with a mixture of meaty force and near-feminine grace. The film plunges into the past; Jaguar Paw belongs to a Mayan tribe (the dialogue is entirely in Mayan) that exists in a state of bliss, complete with firelit storytelling and erotic ease. The idyll is snapped when the tribe's encampment is raided and its inhabitants, including Jaguar Paw, are hauled away—some to be sold as slaves, others to be sacrificed at a temple, above a swaying mob. (Before the execution, their skins are painted blue—a bad omen for anyone who recalls the blue-daubed faces of the rebels in "Braveheart.") As the priest raises the knife, Jaguar Paw is spared, thanks to a happy coincidence lifted straight from a Tintin book called "Prisoners of the Sun." He races home to find his wife and child, pursued by the slave master Zero Wolf (Raoul Trujillo), whose notion of festive jewelry is a stack of human jawbones on his upper arm. The chase is on.

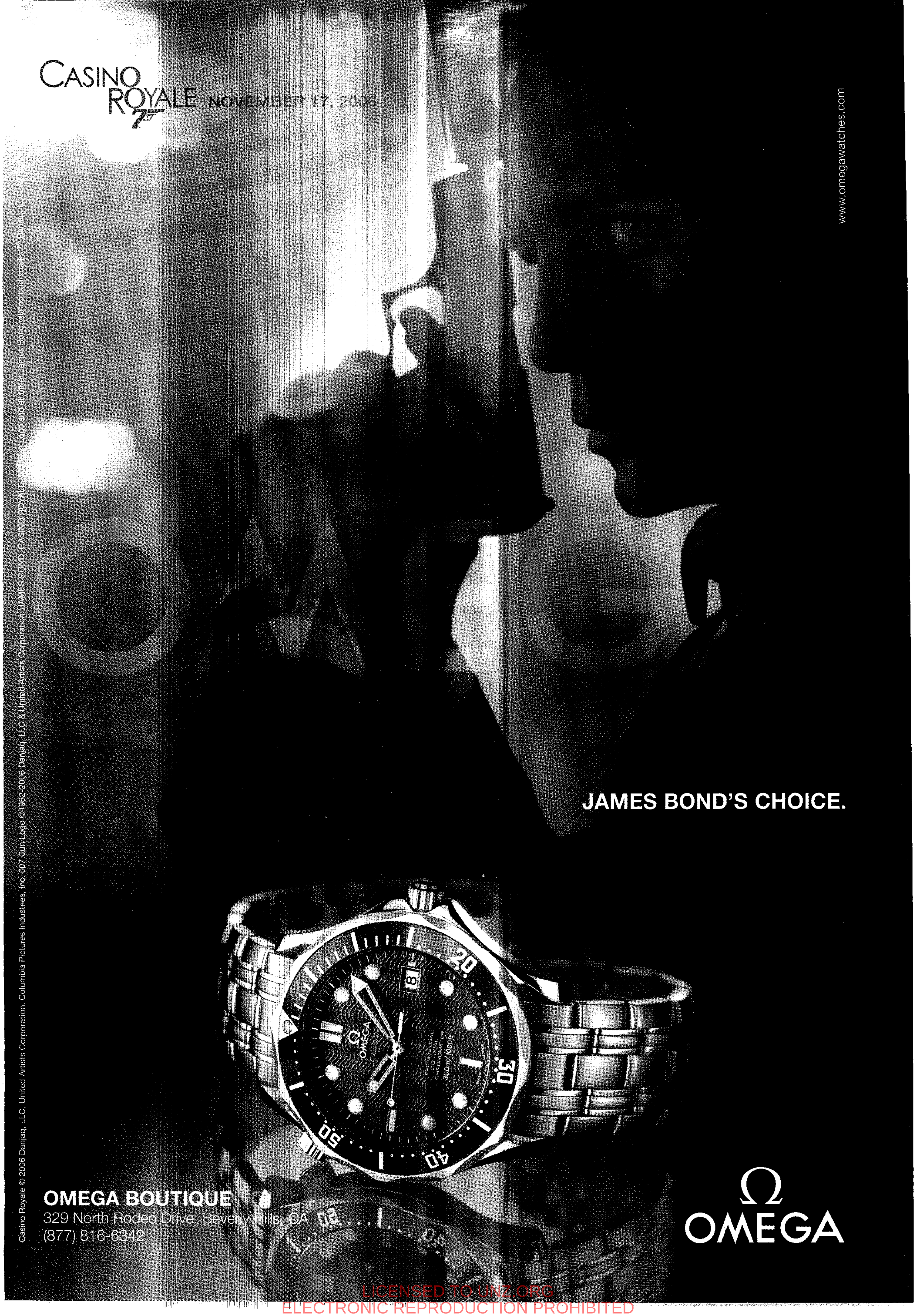
"Apocalypto" is a pathological work of art. It is neither gratuitous nor casual; Gibson is not trying out an idea or testing a visual manner, and the digital cameras used throughout by the director of photography, Dean Semler, yield both a lustre and a pantherish mobility that reach to the guts of the story. That is the thing about Gibson, fool that he is in other ways: he has learned how to tell a tale, and to raise a pulse in the telling. You have to admire that basic gift, uncommon as it is in Hollywood these days, though equally you have to ask what obsessions goad it on. Contrary to what his detractors say, I don't believe Gibson is roused by violence in itself. What lures him, in his dark remoldings of Catholic iconography, is breakage and restoration—the deeper and more foul the wounds, the more pressing the need to see them healed. Hence the multiple endings of "Apocalypto," at once overpowering and risible, and hence the blessing that one of the murderous hunters bestows on a friend whose life, cut short by a snakebite to the neck, is quickly draining away: "Travel well." ♦

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC., PUBLISHED THROUGH ITS DIVISION THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. COPYRIGHT ©2006 THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Volume LXXXII, No. 42, December 18, 2006. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: Jan. 23 & 30, Feb. 13 & 20, July 10 & 17, Aug. 7 & 14, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Louis Cona, vice-president and publisher; Jamie Engel, associate publisher; Alatia Bradley, advertising director; Karen Quinn-Panzer, advertising director; Melissa McCarthy Strome, advertising director; Judy Safir, director of finance and business operations; Daniella Wells, executive director marketing & strategic planning; Janine Silvera, executive director of creative services; Jacqueline Cinguina, director of integrated marketing; Steve Porter, creative director/advertising; Ellen Reid, creative services director; Lynn Oberlander, general counsel. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate; Maurie Perl, senior vice-president–chief communications officer. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: Steven T. Florio, Advance Magazine Group vice chairman; David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684; call (800) 825-2510; or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Four weeks are required for change of address. Please give both new and old address as printed on most recent label. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks of receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Jamie Engel at (212) 286-5491. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For Permissions and Reprint requests, please call (212) 286-8349 or fax requests to (212) 286-8628. To receive your issues without scent strips, please e-mail scentfree@newyorker.com. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online: www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines on the World Wide Web, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information by mail and/or e-mail, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING. MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, AND OTHER MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.


CASINO ROYALE NOVEMBER 17, 2006
007
www.omegawatches.com
JAMES BOND'S CHOICE.
OMEGA
OMEGA
PROFESSIONAL CO-AXIAL CHRONOMETER 300m/1000ft
20
30
40
50

OMEGA BOUTIQUE
329 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, CA
(877) 816-6342

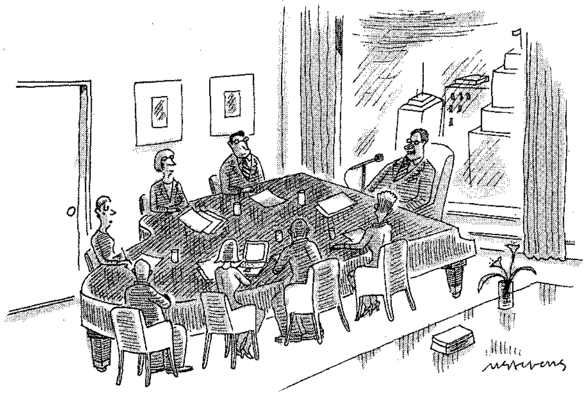
Casino Royale © 2006 Danjaq, LLC, United Artists Corporation, Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. 007 Gun Logo ©1962-2006 Danjaq, LLC & United Artists Corporation. JAMES BOND, CASINO ROYALE, 007 Gun Logo and all other James Bond related trademarks ™ Danjaq, LLC.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

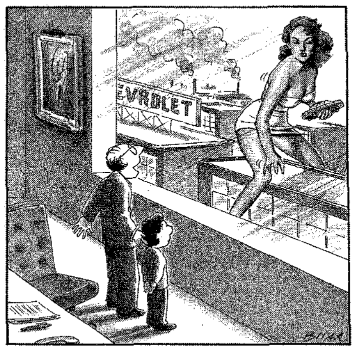
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Tom Cheney, must be received by Sunday, December 17th. Finalists in the December 4th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the January 8th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Hmm. What rhymes with layoffs?"
Carl Gable, Norcross, Ga.



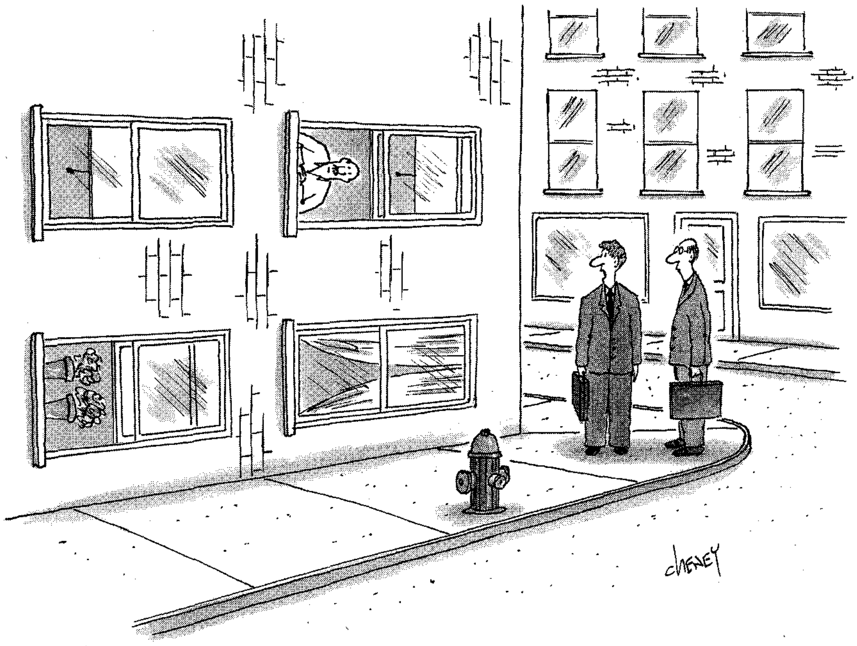
THE FINALISTS

"Son, we finally attracted the fifty-foot-and-over demographic."
Joel Herm, Oregon, Wis.

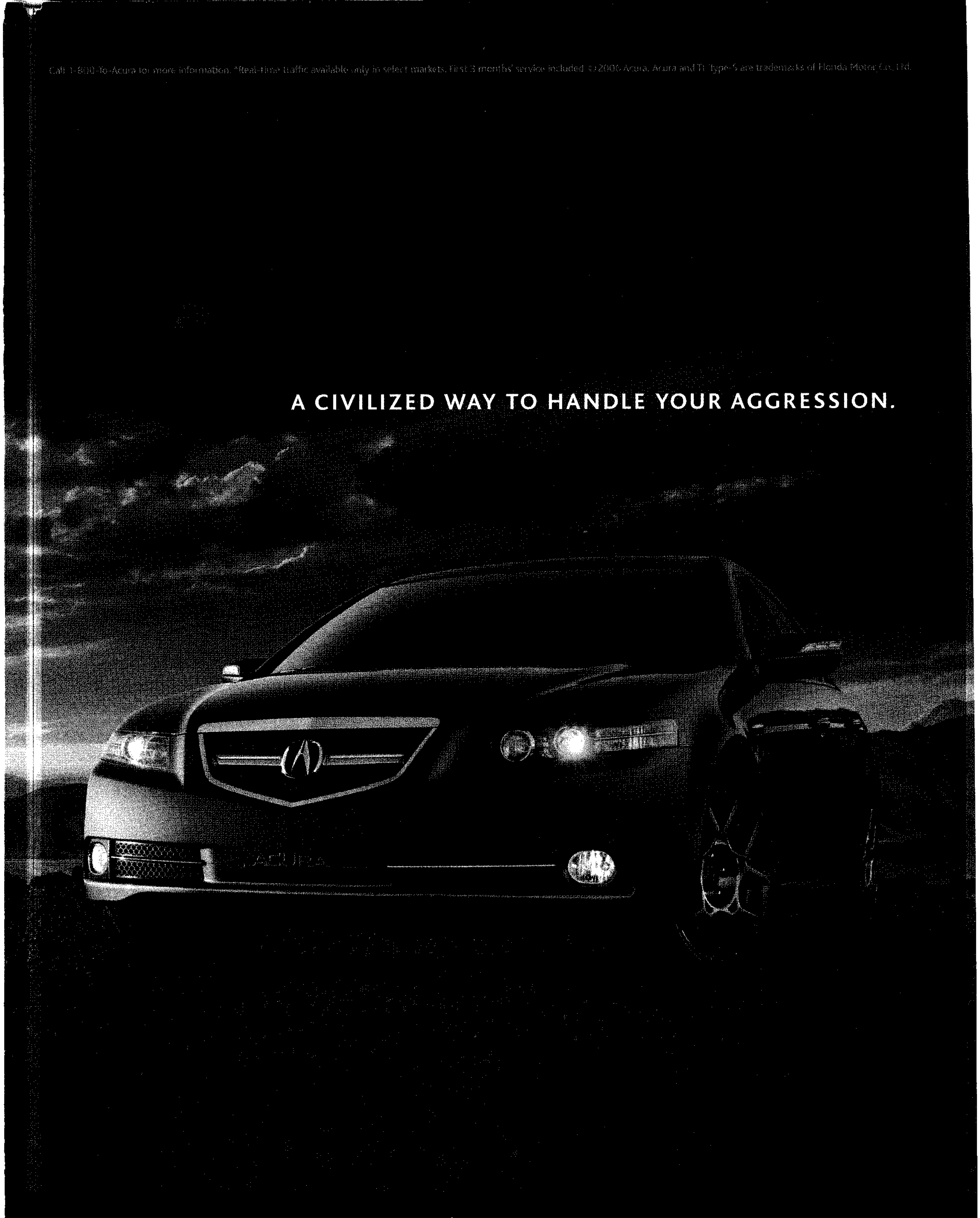
"You know, I couldn't have done it without your mother."
Scott Fitzpatrick, Westfield, N.J.

"Son, one day all this will be yours. Except her."
Michael Embley, Tiburon, Calif.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



“ ”

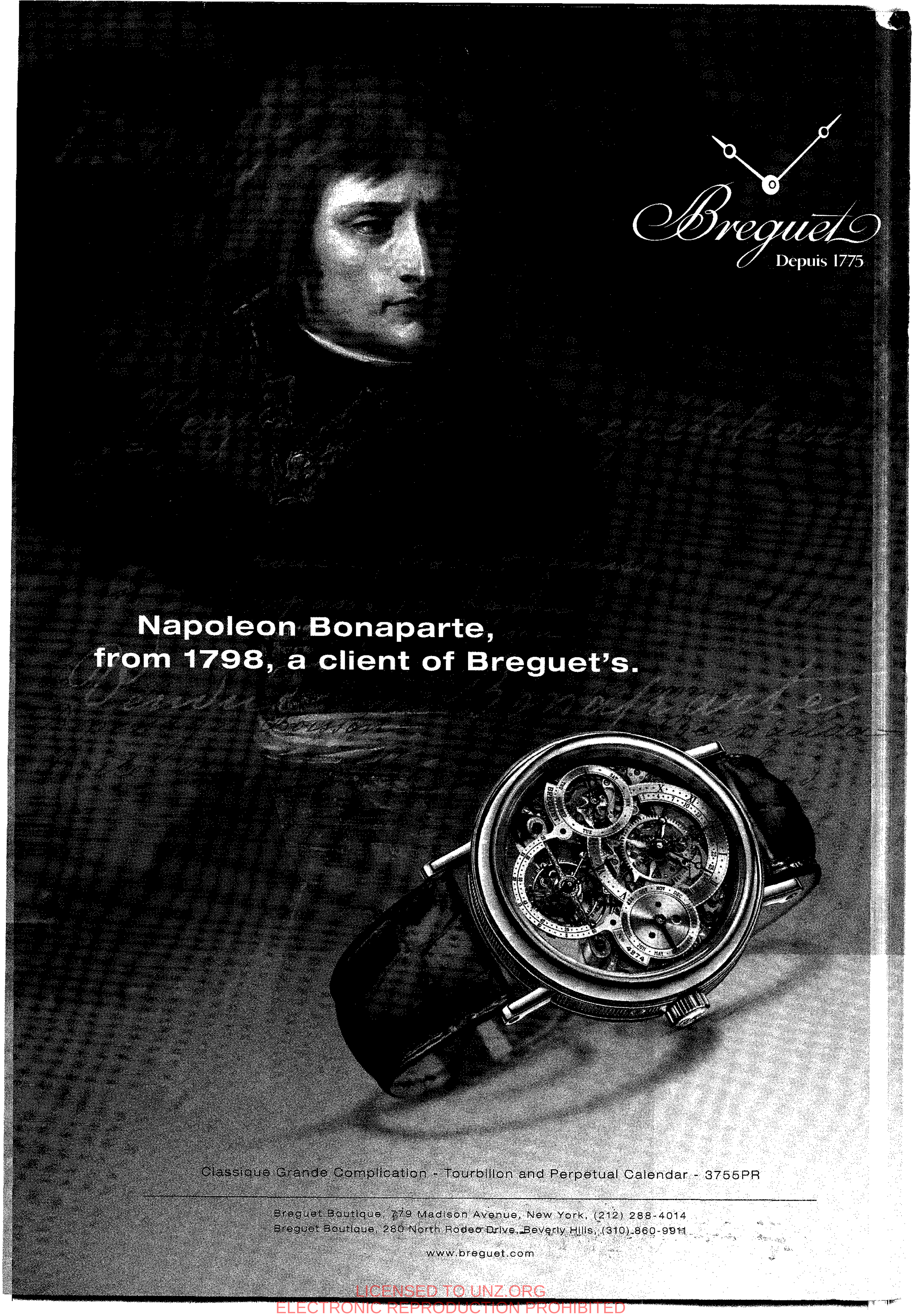


Call 1-800-To-Acura for more information. *Real-time traffic available only in select markets. First 3 months' service included. ©2006 Acura. Acura and TL Type-S are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

The all-new Acura TL Type-S. The civilized way to handle aggression is to embrace it, with 286 hp and sport suspension, exclusive to the Type-S. While enjoying sophisticated technology like voice-activated navigation and real-time traffic monitoring.* Aggression has been refined. Barely. Visit us at acura.com.

ACURA
ADVANCE.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Breguet
Depuis 1775

**Napoleon Bonaparte,
from 1798, a client of Breguet's.**

Classique Grande Complication - Tourbillon and Perpetual Calendar - 3755PR

Breguet Boutique, 779 Madison Avenue, New York, (212) 288-4014
Breguet Boutique, 280 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 860-9911

www.breguet.com